

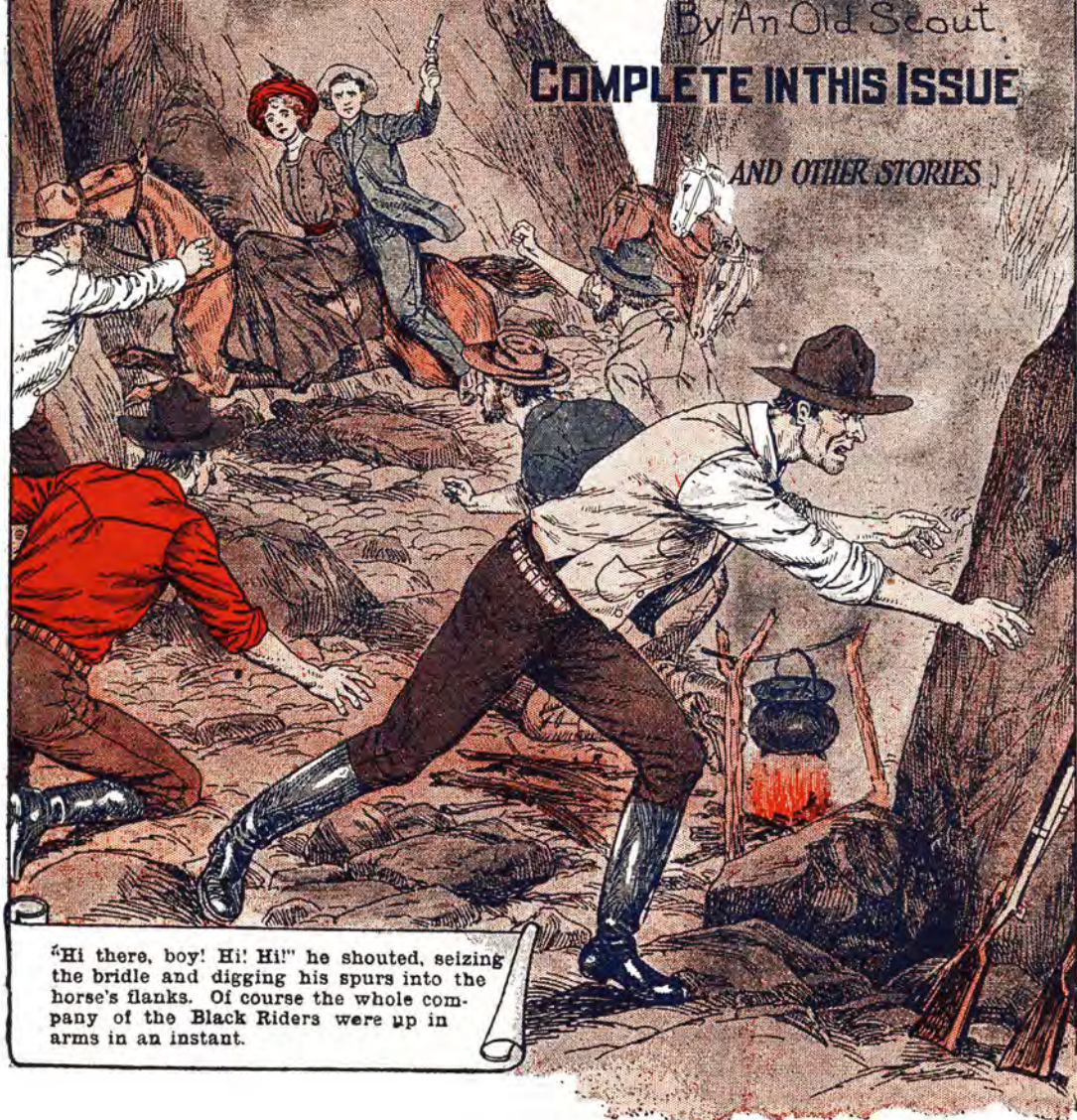
PLUCK AND LUCK

DICK, THE HALF BREED.

By An Old Scout

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

AND OTHER STORIES



"Hi there, boy! Hi! Hi!" he shouted, seizing the bridle and digging his spurs into the horse's flanks. Of course the whole company of the Black Riders were up in arms in an instant.

PLUCK AND LUCK

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DICK, THE HALF-BREED

OR, THE TRAIL OF THE INDIAN CHIEF

By AN OLD SCOUT.

CHAPTER I.—The Cry in the Canyon.

"You've got to take it, young Dick Dare. There's no help for it. The stage is gone and I can't pack it over the mountains myself."

Dick looked at the big leather bag very doubtfully. Then he looked at Major Remington, acting paymaster of the Eighth Cavalry, United States Army, now stationed at Fort Cruger, in Southern Utah, and shook his head.

"I can't do it, Major," he said. "My business is to carry the mail over the mountains to Green River and intermediate points. You know very well that I have no right to risk the safety of the United States mail, and I don't think I need tell you that I would be doing so if I took that bag of yours over to the fort."

Major Remington looked immensely disappointed. He strode up and down the broad piazza of the Union House, at White Sulphur Springs, Colorado, chewing the end of his cigar fiercely and puzzling his brains to know what to do. Meanwhile Dick Dare, the stalwart young fellow who carried the mail over what was known as the "Trail of the Indian Chief" for Mail Contractor Marston, kept on washing down his horse at the pump, whistling at his work and trying his best to appear oblivious to the Major's very agitated condition of mind, something which he found it very hard to do, for Dick Dare was a kind-hearted fellow and always liked to oblige.

"Say, Dick, I said twenty dollars, but I'll make it fifty. Do it now, that's a good fellow," said the Major, leaning over the piazza railing and returning to the charge again.

"No, sir," replied Dick emphatically. "Don't offer me big money for it, Major. It hurts my feelings."

"You're a queer boy, Dick."

"Well, I try to be square with everybody, Major. You know very well that twenty dollars is quite enough for the job."

"That depends. A man should always make the most of his opportunities. Now this is yours."

"I'd do it for twenty dollars if I thought I had any right to do it at all."

"Can't do it, my boy. Can't possibly."

"I think not. How came you to miss the stage, anyway?"

"Dick, I'm a candid man. I'll own the truth. I drank too much before dinner, and so I got asleep."

"And let the stage get away without the bag?"

"That's about the size of it."

"Why don't you ride over yourself? I'll see that you are supplied with a horse."

"Can't do it, my boy. Can't possibly. If I don't show up in Denver to-morrow morning by 9 o'clock my name is mud with a big M. Dick, I'm in a hole."

"And you want me to lift you out at the risk of falling into one myself?"

"That's not just the way to put it, Dick."

"I think it is exactly the way."

"But—"

"Say, Major, I believe in calling a spade a spade. Now look here, suppose it is known that you are to go over with the paybag and we're being watched at the present moment? Suppose—"

"Hold on, Dick! You give me a cold chill. Do you think—"

"Yes, I do, Major!"

"Thunder! The Black Riders, is that what you mean?"

"That's it. They are more active than ever now."

"Who's leading them, Dick? Have you heard?"

"They say it's Joaquin Matanzas."

"The renegade greaser who escaped the lynchers at Las Vegas, New Mexico, last fall?"

"That's what they say in—"

"Joaquin is a hard citizen, Dick."

"He's all of that. He's got a lot of Indians with him, a branch of the Apache tribe, they say, some half-breeds, too; a terrible gang. They've been doing some bad work during the last few weeks."

Major Remington grew more and more uneasy as Dick continued to talk. His agitation increased as the young mail carrier went on to tell of some of the robberies and murders which had occurred in the mountains during the Major's visit East, from which he had just returned.

"It's worth a hundred dollars to carry the paybag to the fort under these conditions, Dick," he said at last. "But, as I don't want to insult you again, I'm not going to increase my original of—"

fer, but I'll tell you what I will do. I'll get Senator Brown to apply for a chance for you to bid on the whole mail contract next fall, and, what's more, I'll guarantee to get some of the heaviest men in Denver to go on your bond."

Shrewd man the Major. He had hit it at last.

It was the height of Dick Dare's ambition to swing a mail contract on his own account, and, let us add right here, that although Dick was only a street waif from Denver, with no knowledge whatever of his parentage, he was able to do it, for a pluckier boy never drew breath, and when it came to enterprise and persistency, Dick was all there. He was as dark as an Indian, large for his age, standing six feet in his stockings now, when he was only eighteen, lithe and sinewy, with great muscular development about the arms and legs. He could ride a mustang like an Indian. He was the best rifle shot in the region. As for his courage, no one could question it, and it was for these reasons that Mr. Marston, the mail contractor, had selected him for the lonely and dangerous route from White Sulphur Springs to Green River. It was the famous "Trail of the Indian Chief," and to follow it took the boy through one of the worst passes of the Rocky Mountains. It was his duty to deliver the mail at a dozen or more out-of-the-way mining camps. For two years and over Dick Dare had performed the service most acceptably for very small pay, and, as we have stated, it was his ambition to become a full-fledged mail contractor.

"But how am I going to do it while I'm under age?" he asked the Major. "There's the snag in the way."

"Then we must get it out of the way, Dick," was the reply. "It can be arranged."

"How?"

"Leave that to me."

"You'll do it?"

"I promise."

For a moment more Dick hesitated.

"I've no right to take the bag, but it's a bargain," he said. "I don't want any pay, though. I won't take money for it, and if it is lost don't blame me."

The Major was jubilant. The leather bag contained ten thousand dollars in greenbacks, money for the troops, including several months' back pay, and circumstances made it very necessary that it should be delivered at Fort Cruger by the following morning. The fort was located in a lonely spot, seventy miles from White Sulphur Springs. The stage stopped there, but it was off Dick's route. Before Mr. Marston got the mail contract the stage owners had carried it, but as they refused to sell out to the new contractor, the service was now performed on horseback by Dick Dare. Twenty minutes later Dick was galloping up the mountain trail on his horse Barney, as fine an animal as could be found in Colorado.

There were still several hours of daylight, and Dick hoped to reach Sandy McGraw's before dark. This was a lonely hut, far up in the mountains, once occupied by a queer old Scotchman who had mysteriously disappeared about a year before. Up to the time of his disappearance Sandy McGraw used to furnish meals for the stage passengers. The stop was still made at the hut, but now the passengers had to cook for themselves

if they wanted anything to eat. Dick, as he urged Barney on, thought it very probable that he might come up with the stage at Sandy's, in which case he had arranged with Major Remington that the pay-bag was to be turned over to the driver, which would save him the journey in to the fort and out again, a matter of at least twenty miles. So Dick pushed on to the summit of the first pass, from which point was to be had one of the most glorious views in that section of Colorado. We can no more stop to describe it than Dick felt that he could stop to look at it. It was an old story with Dick, and he turned his gaze down on the other side of the ridge or "divide" as he called it and looked down, down, down thousands of feet at a little hut which stood beside a mountain stream. This was Sandy McGraw's.

"No sign of the stage there," muttered Dick. "By gracious, they must have made good time to get beyond Sandy's so soon."

The sun was getting pretty low now, and before a great while it would be dark. Dick allowed his eyes to roam along the trail, coming nearer and nearer the foot of the divide. He did not believe that the stage could have gone beyond Sandy's, and in a moment he knew that he was right, for he caught sight of it directly beneath him at the point where the trail struck the flow of Long Canyon.

"My!" cried Dick, "they've broken down!"

This was evidently the case. The horses had been unhitched and the stage was tilted over against the rocks, and the passengers were all standing around. They looked like ants down there in the canyon, but Dick was still able to recognize the driver, who seemed to be tinkering away at the forward axle. Dick pulled out a powerful field glass, which he always carried, and turned it upon the little group. There were six altogether, including the driver, and all men except one. Dick's glass was a good one and he could see that the exception was a girl about his own age, whom he remembered seeing at the Union House.

"There she is," muttered Dick, "and she's as pretty as a picture. Wonder what her name is? I meant to find out before I left, but the Major bothered me so that it slipped out of my head."

Was Dick smitten with a pretty face at last? Hardly so bad as that, and yet it must be admitted that he had been very much attracted by the girl.

"This is going to give me another chance to get a look at her," he muttered. "Anyway, it will let me out on the paybag. Up there, Barney! We're got to overtake the stage."

Now, when Dick said up he meant down, and it would have brought your heart into your mouth to have seen Barney get down the hill. In a moment the stage and the canyon in which it had become stalled were lost to view, and Dick found himself flying down the "Trail of the Indian Chief" at the risk of his own neck and Barney's legs. In less than ten minutes he expected to be alongside the stage, and everything went well for the first five, when all at once a wild shout rang out in the canyon below.

"Trouble!" gasped Dick. "Great Scott! I hope it isn't the Black Riders!"

Bang! Bang! Bang! Instantly the firing be-

gan. Again the shouts were heard, and mingled with them was a woman's scream.

"That's what it is!" cried Dick; "it must be. By thunder! they've attacked the stage and they are going to carry off that girl! On, Barney, on! Blame those fellows! They'd rob a blind beggar. They shall hear from me, though, if they harm that girl."

Dick whipped out his revolver, dug his spurs deep into poor Barney's flanks, and dashed on down the slope at breakneck speed.

CHAPTER II.—Hot on the Trail.

Dick Dare was as good as his name every time. There was no danger that the mail boy was not ready to face in a good cause. Major Remington knew this perfectly well, hence he felt not the slightest hesitation in trusting him with the pay-bag. Moreover, he knew that the boy was as honest as the sun, and would fight for the bag like a tiger should anybody try to take it away from him. In short, the Major would far rather have trusted the bag to Dick than to have carried it over the dangerous trail himself. As he urged Barney on down the slope, Dick was fully prepared for the worst, consequently he was in no way surprised when coming in sight of the scene of action he saw some fifteen or twenty men, all wearing black masks and mounted upon splendid horses, in the act of riding away from the disabled stage.

Evidently they had been through all the trunks and taken everything of value. The driver and all the passengers lay stretched upon the ground dead, and seated upon one of the horses before one of the Black Riders—it was the last of the little procession—Dick saw the girl passenger in the ill-fated stage. She caught sight of Dick at the same instant and threw out her hands, uttering one wild appeal for help.

"Drop her!" cried Dick. "Drop that girl, I say!"

Instantly he sent two shots flying toward the outlaw, who wheeled around in his saddle and fired, too. If it had not been for the fear of hitting the girl Dick could have brought the Black Rider down easily enough, but as it was he made a miss of it and the outlaw had time to get in his deadly work. One shot flew past Dick's head and was within an inch of putting an end to his career forever, while the other did that very thing for Barney, for it took the horse directly between the eyes and down went Barney in his tracks, with Dick flying over his head.

"I'm a goner," thought the mail boy. "Nothing can save me now."

He believed it fully. All the Black Riders stopped short and several wheeled around to see what the matter was.

"Who is it, Joaquin?" called one.

"Dick, the Mail Carrier," was the answer. "Blast his little soul, I've fixed him. What gall he's got to think that he could interfere with my plans! Be quiet, girl. This hollering won't help you any. You've got to go with me, and that's all there is about it. Hold your tongue."

The girl, who was doing some pretty good screaming just then, took the hint and quieted down.

"Is he dead?" called one of the riders.

"You bet your life he is, and so's the horse, too," growled the renegade. "Here, Maxey, I can't let go of this girl. Get down there and grab the mail bags. Blame it all, he seems to have two. Put a shot into him if he stirs."

It was a ticklish moment for Dick. Discretion is ever the better part of valor. The brave boy wanted to save the pay-bag and to save the girl from the hands of the outlaws. He knew very well that he could do neither if he gave the slightest sign of life just then, so he very wisely remained motionless, hardly daring to breathe. Maxey, who seemed to be pretty well charged with whisky, bent over him and hastily decided that he was dead, after which he took possession of the two bags.

"What's this other one?" he called out. "This hain't no mail bag. Leastways, I never seen one like it before."

"Hold it up and let's look at it," answered Joaquin.

"Thunder and guns, it's the pay-bag for Fort Cruger. Gee whiz! Here's a haul!"

"That's the ticket! It's the pay-bag!" cried Joaquin, but we mustn't stay here if we want to get through the Veta Pass before dark. Sling it over your saddle, Maxey. That's the talk. Now then, boys, away she goes!"

Off they dashed down the canyon, and as soon as the pounding of the horses' hoofs had retreated far enough in the distance to make it safe, Dick Dare pulled himself to his feet. His face was as pale as death and his eyes blazing with anger.

"Poor Barney!" he muttered, looking down at the horse. "You've been a good friend to me and have carried me many a mile. I wish—Hello! Who are you?"

Suddenly the door of the stage opened and a fiery red head was thrust out.

"Say, have they gone?" called a trembling voice. "Gosh all hemlock, I hain't a-coming out if there's any of them around."

"Come out of there and give an account of yourself!" cried Dick. "Who are you, anyhow? Oh, you needn't be afraid. There are none of them here now."

"Gosh! that so?" drawled the fellow, opening the door and stepping out of the stage.

He was young, about Dick's own age; in fact, long-legged, slab-sided, a shock head as red as fire, and a fearfully freckled face. His clothes were old and ragged, but clean, which was more than could be said for a pair of clumsy boots into which the ends of his trousers were thrust. Dick remembered seeing him when the stage stopped at the Union House, but further than this he had no idea who the fellow might be. As he stepped to the ground the boy looked Dick over doubtfully.

"Say, who be you?" he asked.

"I'm the mail carrier," replied Dick. "What's your name?"

"Bill Struthers."

"Where do you belong?"

"Waal, I don't belong nowhere special. My dad was a cow puncher over in Kansas. He got killed last month and I've been a-tramping of it ever since. I helped the driver with his horses down to Raccoon creek, so he told me I might

ride a piece. Waal, I reckon I won't ride no more with him. No, that's right."

"What happened him?" demanded Dick, restraining his patience the best he could. He was wild to be up and doing, yet after all he had no idea what he could do.

"What happened?" replied Bill. "Why, them jokers with the black rags on their faces came on to us and shot all hands, that's all. They took away that pretty gal. She's Miss Alice Duvar, she is. Blame nice gal, too. She wuz going up to her father's mine somewhere, I dunno just where. Waal, they didn't get me. I darted inside that stage and hid under the seat. Waal, what's the use of hanging round when you hain't got no shootin' iron. But, by gosh! I'd like to help that there gal."

"We must help her if it is possible," said Dick. "Where are the stage horses? Do you know?"

"Didn't they run 'em off?"

"I didn't see them."

"Waal, then I reckon they didn't. Last I see of the they were hoofing it up the canyon. S'pose them fellers went after them, but I s'pose they couldn't hev, since you didn't see nothing of them at all."

"That gives me a chance!" cried Dick. "Guess there isn't much fight in you, Bill Struthers, but you can go along with me, if you please."

Dick had started up the canyon, following the bed of the stream. It was better to have Bill Struthers for company than nobody, but even if he had been alone Dick Dare would have acted just the same. He knew the whole region perfectly, and, what is more, he knew that in the direction which he was now following the canyon soon came to an abrupt end at the foot of a tottering precipice.

This told him that if the stage horses had gone in that direction they could not have gone very far. As they hurried along he and his strange companion, who was little better than a young tramp, got better acquainted. From him Dick learned the details of the sudden attack. It was the first time the Black Riders had attacked the stage, and Dick could not help feeling that there must be some special reason for their doing so now, and he shrewdly concluded that the reason had something to do with Miss Alice Duvar. His heart went out to the unfortunate girl. He determined to save her if such a thing was possible. Then there was the pay-bag, too. Dick was half wild when he thought of that. All at once they came in sight of the cliff, and there were the stage horses quietly standing. They had run as far as they could go and stopped.

"Can you ride bareback, Bill?" asked Dick.

"You bet I can," was the reply.

They had the harness off the horses in an instant. Away they went dashing down the canyon.

"It's the Veta Pass," thought Dick, "and I know a short cut which I'd like to bet Joaquin never heard of."

In a few minutes he turned aside into a narrow rift in the rocky wall, barely wide enough to admit the passage of the horses, which were by no means bad specimens.

CHAPTER III.—Captured by the Navajos.

"Gosh, Dick, this old plug of mine is beginning to get winded," called Bill Struthers, after they

had covered a distance of four miles and more.

"Not yet," replied Dick. "We are almost there. You want to hold out if you can."

"Oh, I can hold out till the sun goes down. It's the hoss."

"Keep him at it. Talking about sundown, it will be pitch dark inside of ten minutes. What about fighting if we get in close quarters. Are you going to flunk?"

"Waal, I dunno. I ain't much on the fight, an' that's a fact. Yer see, my dad was a reg'lar rip snorter, that's what he was."

"And you don't take after him it seems."

"Waal now, Dick, he did the fighting for the family, and if a mean snoozer hadn't put a bullet in his back he'd be alive to do it yet."

"That so? What became of the fellow?"

"What became of him?" drawled Bill, his little eyes snapping. "Why, I shot him. Reckon the coyotes hev chewed him up by this time. That's what started the sheriff after me and why I ran away. If I hadn't a-done it, though, he'd a-done me, for he was a-coming fer me full head of steam."

"Hush!" interrupted Dick, suddenly reining in. "We are close on to the trail now, and, by gracious! there they are."

Bill pulled in so suddenly that he almost went over the horse's head. It was still light enough to distinguish their surroundings. A little in advance the canyon suddenly narrowed into a mere rift again, and beyond this point voices could be heard talking.

"That's the main trail to the Veta Pass," Dick whispered. "For some reason or other they seem to have halted there. Stay where you are, Bill. I must get ahead and see what this means."

He slipped off his horse and stole on into the dark shadows of the rift.

"They ought to be here soon," he heard some one say. "There's no use making a move till we are all together, boys."

"Joaquin," thought Dick. "I know his voice."

He crept on, coming in a moment to where the rift joined with the main canyon. It was because the Black Riders were newcomers in this part of the country that they had never discovered this cross canyon. Indeed it was by the merest accident that Dick discovered it several months before the opening of our story. He little dreamed at the time how valuable that discovery was likely to prove, but he fully realized the advantage it gave him now, for he was able to come up within ten feet of the Black Band. They had all dismounted and were seated about a fire, over which one of their number was engaged in frying some kind of meat. Joaquin was pacing up and down a little beyond the fire, and when Dick turned his head toward the horses, which were standing a little below the point where the rift joined the main canyon, he saw the girl, Alice Duvar, seated on Joaquin's horse, with her hands tied behind her. She was tied to the saddle and not only in a most uncomfortable situation, but entirely helpless.

"This is my chance," thought Dick. "I may be shot, but pshaw! If it's to be it's to be. I've got to rescue that girl!"

As noiselessly as a cat Dick stole out into the main canyon. In a moment he was alongside the horse, and then he whispered:

"Hist! Hist! I'm going to get up behind you. Don't say a word. I'll save you if I can!"

Alice sat motionless. Dick could not even tell if she heard. He never stopped to find out, but putting his hand upon the horse's flank, vaulted into the saddle as lightly as a cat.

"Hi there, boy! Hi, Hi!" he shouted, seizing the bridle and digging his spurs into the horse's flanks.

"It's Dick, the Mail Boy!" yelled Joaquin, firing on the instant.

But Dick was too quick for him. As he guided the horse into the rift with his left hand, he thrust out his right, which held the cocked revolver. Three times he was able to let fly before Joaquin could get in his first shot, and then vanished into what the outlaws had always believed to be a mere niche in the rock. Wild yells rose behind him. Shot after shot rang out, echoing back from the towering rocks.

"Gee whiz! you've got her," bawled Bill Struthers as Dick dashed into view.

"Where are you taking me?" asked Alice, fearfully. "I've trusted myself to you, and—"

"And you need have no fear," broke in Dick. "I'm only the mail carrier. I'll save you from those wretches if I can."

Taking the bridle in his teeth, he pulled out his knife, turned and cut the girl's bonds.

"Are you armed?" he asked.

"No," said Alice. "If I had been there would be one less of those masked men alive now, at all events."

"That's the way to talk. It was a horrible affair. I only wish I had come up sooner."

"You could not have done anything if you had. They came upon us so suddenly that none of us were prepared. Who are they, do you know?"

"They call themselves the Black Riders of the Rockies. That fellow who captured you is Joaquin Matanzas."

"Formerly of Las Vegas, New Mexico?"

"I believe he comes from somewhere down that way. Do you know him?"

"Do I? I should think I did," shuddered Alice. "I was frightened enough as it was, but I should have been more frightened if I had known into whose hands I had fallen."

"Gosh! They are right on top of us!" called Bill, who, although in the lead, kept continually looking back.

"I'm going to shoot when they come near enough," she quietly said.

"You'll have to if you want to save yourself," replied Dick. "I can do some of it, too, and I will. It would be a bad job if they happened to kill the horse."

"Halt there! Halt!" shouted Joaquin's voice behind.

Alice turned and fired into the gathering gloom. Dick was in the act of imitating her example when a dismal yell from Bill Struthers attracted the attention of all.

"Injuns! Injuns!" he shouted. "Gosh, we're between two fires! What's to be done now?"

"They are Navajos!" cried Dick. "We are lost!"

Suddenly the savages with wild yells rushed upon them, while the Black Riders, who seemed to have no desire to risk a fight, turned their horses and galloped away.

"Give guns! Give guns!" grunted the leader. "We kill; heap kill if no give guns!"

There was no help for it, nothing to do but surrender. Out of the frying pan into the fire Dick Dare had tumbled. In a moment they were prisoners in the hands of the Navajos.

CHAPTER IV.—Prisoners in the Indian Camp.

Because Dick Dare showed no fight when he ran so suddenly into the Indian band, it must not be supposed for an instant that our hero had lost his courage all at once. Nothing of the sort. Dick, although little more than a boy, was an old hand at this sort of business, and in promptly surrendering he acted in the wisest possible way, for there in the narrow canyon there was no chance to fight, and he well knew that the Navajos were the fiercest and most savage of their kind. To have resisted capture would have been to be annihilated, and Dick did not want to be annihilated—that was all.

"Don't despair," he whispered to Alice. "If we speak them fair and fall in with their ways there will be lots of chances for us to escape. Anyhow, they are a good sight better than the Black Riders. I'd sooner trust a full-blooded Indian than one of those half-breed scoundrels any day in the week."

These hurried words were spoken while the Indians came crowding around them. The bucks said nothing to their prisoners beyond ordering them to dismount and give up their arms. Those who did the talking spoke good enough English. Another party gave chase to the Black Riders. Some ten or more halted in the canyon to look after the prisoners. The revolvers were taken away from the boys and Alice. Bill Struthers made a great clatter about a small jack-knife which he wanted to keep, which resulted in one of the bucks giving him a crack over the side of the head, and he lost the knife just the same. Then they were tied to their saddles, Alice being placed upon a spare horse belonging to the Indians, and for half an hour they remained there in the canyon in silence, waiting for the rest of the band to return. Suddenly the clatter of horses was heard up the canyon, and the Indians with wild yells came dashing down to join their friends. Two of the leaders carried fresh scalps, so Dick concluded that they had come up with the Black Riders, and there had been a fight. Nothing was said, however, and he knew that it would be simply useless to ask questions.

The order was given to start, and soon the whole band was on the move. For more than two hours the ride continued. They passed from one canyon to another, going far into the heart of the mountains, into a region so seldom visited even by the most daring prospectors as to be practically unexplored. At last they began descending into a deep valley, the descent occupying a good half hour more, and at last they came in sight of the Indian village. Along the banks of a deep stream the lodges stood ranged in a double row. Fires were blazing, dogs barked, and the squaws and papooses came out to meet them. What became of Alice Dick could not tell, she was hurried away so rapidly, but he and Bill Struthers were bound hand and foot, and put

lodge for safe keeping. It was the most uncomfortable night Dick ever passed, and he was glad enough when daylight came.

"Say, Dick, are you awake?" asked Bill, as the morning light began to creep into the lodge.

"Of course I'm awake," replied Dick. "I haven't been asleep."

"No more have I."

"That's nonsense, Bill. You were snoring away loud enough a few minutes ago."

"Was I? Well, then I must be mistaken. Thought I hadn't though. Say, what be we going to do?"

"I'm sure I don't know, but our case is not the worst."

"No. There's that poor gal. Blamed if I ain't sorry for her! Just as we get her out of one scrape we have to go and tumble into another. Wonder where she is now?"

"If I could have broken these infernal raw-hide thongs I'd have known by this time," said Dick. "No such thing as doing it, though. Hello! Who's coming now?"

It was a young buck with something to eat. There was a bowl of mush for each of the boys, and some of the coarse bread the Indians make.

"Hungry?" asked the buck, as he stood grinning at the entrance to the lodge.

"Yes, indeed we are," replied Dick, "but we can't eat tied up this way."

"No? Well, me untie," said the buck, and he proceeded to free the boys' hands, standing at the door of the lodge with his rifle all ready for instant use while they partook of the food.

"Say, Jim, what are you going to do with us?" asked Dick at last.

"Me no know," replied the buck. "Medicine man he tell bimeby, mebbe."

As soon as the boys had finished eating, the buck took the empty ollas—a sort of rude clay pot which the Navajos make themselves—and departed. A little later a grave-looking Indian, whose gray hair showed him to be well on in years, entered the lodge.

"White boys," he said, with scarcely a trace of accent, "you must prepare to die. In half an hour your souls will be in the land of shadows. It is of no use for you to say anything. Nothing can save you. If you have any prayers to make to your God, say them now."

This was interesting information. Dick heard it in stolid silence, but Bill Struthers at once set up a terrible clatter.

"Say, old man, don't kill me," he cried. "I ain't never done nothing to no Indian. Let me loose. Let me stay here with the tribe and I'll work for you like a slave. All I want to do is work, and I'd just as soon work for an Indian as a white man. Don't kill me! I don't want to die."

Now this was only a very small part of what Bill Struthers said. He would have kept it up indefinitely if the old brave, who listened without a word, had not at last interfered.

He pointed his finger at Dick, and looked at him in a way which seemed to show that he admired his silence.

"I'm the mail carrier," said Dick. "If you kill me you will have the braves of the Great Father after you—that's all."

"We care not," replied the Navajo, drawing

himself up proudly. "We have fought the braves of the Great Father before, and we will fight them again. Listen, boy. To-day is the corn dance of the Navajos. To-day we make sacrifices to our gods. You will be that sacrifice. Say your prayers, if you have any to say, for nothing can save you now. See, I cut you loose. You can go as you please, where you will, but do not try to leave the camp or the bullet will kill you and not wait for the dance. Good-by!"

He bent down and with a keen bladed knife cut Bill's bonds and then Dick's. Dick sprang to his feet and faced the Indian with flashing eyes, but Bill Struthers lay whining and moaning on the ground.

"I'm ready whenever you are, chief!" cried Dick, "but how about the white squaw? You will not sacrifice her to the gods of the corn dance? Tell me you will not do that."

"I'm no chief," replied the old Indian slowly. "White boy, this branch of the great Navajos tribe has no chief one time now."

"That don't answer my question," said Dick. "The white squaw? What about the white squaw?"

"Ugh! Ugh!" grunted the Indian contemptuously. "The Navajos no make war on squaws and paposes. The corn god no take squaw for sacrifice. No! The white squaw, she shall live."

Thus saying, the Indian turned and left the lodge, walking with slow, dignified step through the village.

"Get up and stop that whining," said Dick, shoving Bill with his foot. "Confound you, I thought you had some fight in you by the way you talked last night. Don't lie there blubbering like a big bull calf."

CHAPTER V.—Dick Turns into an Indian Chief.

"Say, don't kick me, Dick," whined Bill. "Don't hit a fellow when he's down."

"You're no more down than I am. Get up! Stand on your feet and be a man."

Bill got up and stood shivering like a man with a fit of ague.

"I don't want to die!" he cried. "I fear I am a big coward, but I can't help it. Know what they mean to do with us, Dick?"

"How should I know any more than what you've just heard as well as me?"

"They'll tie us to a stake and burn us alive, that's what. We'll be roasted, and eaten afterwards. Gosh all hemlock! I hope my bones sticks in the throat of some of them, that's what I do."

"Come on!" said Dick. "Indians like men; show yerself one. We'll walk past their infernal wicky-ups and let them see that we are not afraid."

Thus reassured, Bill plucked up spirit and followed him. With his head thrown back and his body erect Dick Dare walked the whole length of the line of lodges, and then took a turn along the other row nearer the creek. The bucks regarded him in grim silence. The squaws stared, and some of the children ran alongside of them, chattering away in the Navajo tongue. At the end of the row of lodges four bucks armed with rifles stood regarding them grimly. It was the same at the other end. Dick saw that there was

no chance to escape. After a little he sat down on the grass by the bank of the creek, wondering whether, if he made a dive into the water, he would not be able to make the opposite bank in safety. Dick would have tried it if he had been alone, but there was Bill to be thought of, and, above all, Alice.

He had seen no trace of the girl as he walked through the Indian camp. For as much as half an hour the boys sat there by the creek talking. Bill had somewhat recovered from his fright. The Indians kept a constant eye on them, but even the children did not come near them now, for the squaws held them back. All at once the Indians began to gather at the upper end of the camp, where there was a long grassy stretch. Stakes were driven into the ground, and great ollas full of smoking hot ears of corn were brought up by the squaws and deposited upon the ground. Dick had heard a good deal about the secret ceremonies of the Navajos. He knew that their great annual feast was about to begin, and that the corn dance would follow. It looked bad for the boys, but it looked worse for the Indian village a moment later. Suddenly from one of the lodges a woman's shrill cry was heard, and a dense smoke came pouring out of the door. An olla overheated had broken over one of the fires behind the lodge, and in trying to save it the hot coals had been scattered about and the squaw managed to get herself all ablaze.

With the flames rising all about her face and head the poor wretch ran for the creek and jumped in. Meanwhile the lodge, as well as the one alongside of it, both as dry as tinder, burst out into flames. A strong wind was sweeping up the valley at the time, and Dick saw at a glance that if something wasn't done to stop it the whole camp would be in a blaze. The blacks made a rush for the burning lodges, but for the moment no one paid the least attention to the woman in the creek. Probably they knew that she could swim, and no doubt under ordinary circumstances the squaw would have been perfectly well able to save herself, but she had been terribly burned and her strength was all gone.

She threw up her hands and was in the act of sinking when Dick, who could not sit quietly by and see anything like this going on, suddenly sprang up, threw off his coat and hat and plunged in after her. A wild shout rang out through the camp as Dick made this bold move, and half a dozen shots went whizzing after the boy. Dick missed them all—missed them because he dove to catch the drowning squaw. For a moment he could do nothing with her, and little to help himself. He got her around the waist, but the frightened squaw, maddened with pain, flung her arms about the brave boy and dragged him down to the bottom. Dick struggled to free himself—struggled for all he was worth—but it was no use. He was drowning—he knew it. He struggled harder, tore himself free, caught the squaw by the hair, and, fighting her off when she tried to grab him again, managed to get her to the surface at last. It had been a fearful effort. The boy was almost strangled. Several bucks jumped into the water and swam toward them. Dick saw them coming, and then all at once his senses left him, and the next he knew he was lying stretched on the grass, stripped naked, with a great crowd of Indians around him. One old brave—it was

the one who had done the talking in the lodge—bent down over him and seemed to be examining his body in every part.

"Brave boy! brave boy!" he grunted, seeing Dick's eyes open. "Him save squaw. All right now. Navajos no forget. No kill now. Brave boy!"

So much in English, and then the Indians burst out into a torrent of words in the Navajo language, at the same time pointing to a series of curious marks on Dick's right thigh. The marks stood out boldly in blue, and were evidently tattooings. Ever since Dick had any recollection they had been a part of his body, but as to how they came to be there he had not the slightest idea. But Dick was thinking about something else besides the marks now. He was busy listening to the conversation which was going on around him. Strange to say, he could understand every word of what was being said, and yet to the best of his knowledge Dick had never learned to talk Navajo. It seemed to come to him like a dream.

"It's certainly the boy," the old Indian was saying. "Look, here are the secret signs which the medicine man put on him when he was a baby. It is the boy! It is our chief!"

"You are right, Black Wolf," cried an old brave. "It is surely the son of the white squaw and Wepetonga."

A wild shout went up. Bucks and squaws pressed about Dick, all trying to get a sight of the marks. Every word they uttered was plain enough to the quiet boy, and yet he could not have answered them if it had been necessary to do so to save his life. He knew now that he had saved the drowning squaw, and that when he lost consciousness the Indians, in trying to revive him, had discovered these marks.

"They have made some big mistake," thought Dick, "but I'll make the most of it."

He started to rise, and did manage to get on his feet, when all at once the Indians broke out with wild cries.

"It's the chief! it's the chief!" they shouted. "The Great Spirit has sent the lost chief of the Warm Spring Navajos back to the tribe!"

CHAPTER VI.—Laying for the Black Riders.

"What are you going to do about it, Dick? Gosh! we are having a bully time here, as far as it goes. It's a blame fine thing for you to be boss of a lot of redskins, and for me to be your first lieutenant, but I'd a good sight rather be knocking about the mines, after all than be stuck here with a lot of heathen savages what don't know B from a bull's foot."

More than a week had passed since Dick Dare and Bill Struthers came among the Warm Spring Navajos. The great feast of the corn dance had come and gone, and still the boys found themselves alive. It would have been a bold buck who dared to raise a hand against our hero just at that time, for Dick Dare, although only a boy, found himself the acknowledged chief of the tribe. Yes, Dick was a half-breed. He had half suspected it, and now he knew that his suspicions were correct. Black Wolf had told him the story, and Dick's own childish memories, called into life as the old brave talked to him, told him that the

tale was true. In short Dick Dare, the street waif from Denver, who since his earliest recollection had been kicked about from pillar to post, had by pure accident been brought back to his father's house, so to speak.

Black Wolf declared that Dick was the son of Wepetonga, the last chief of the Warm Spring Navajos, and a white woman who had been captured during an attack on an emigrant party years before. During one of the fights between the Navajos and the U. S. troops, Wepetonga was killed and Dick carried off. His mother had grieved for him until she died, Black Wolf declared, and ever since the tribe had been without a chief, because Deefa, the medicine man, declared that the child would some day return. This is Dick's story. The mail boy had now been made chief with great ceremony. On the whole, he felt rather proud of it. There was plenty of his father's wild nature in Dick's make-up. Secretly he was resolved to stay where he was, but before he settled down to business there were two things to be done. First there was Major Remington's pay-bag, or at least its contents, still in the possession of the Black Riders. Then there was Alice Duvar. To learn her fate was, to Dick's mind, the most important of all. And right here there was a mystery. There was no question that Dick could put to Black Wolf or any of the tribe which had acknowledged him as their chief which was not freely answered, until it came to this.

When Dick first asked Black Wolf where Alice was, the old Indian simply shook his head, and waving his hand in an indefinite sort of fashion, replied that she had gone away. And this was all the information Dick could get from anyone. The white squaw had gone away. Did it mean that Alice was dead? That she had been murdered? Black Wolf declared not; but where the girl had gone, and why, he would not tell. So the days passed, and Dick found himself not only treated with the most profound respect, but some of the closest secrets of the tribe had been confided to his keeping. Every word spoken in Navajo he found himself able to understand, and he was already beginning to talk the language himself. Indeed, he had just left Black Wolf and several others of the counselors of the tribe, when Bill Struthers met him with the remark with which this chapter begins.

"Don't you say anything against my relations, Bill," Dick replied. "Isn't this better than being sacrificed at the corn dance? Now, come!"

"A blamed sight. I get plenty to eat, too, which is more than I had for many a day before I came in here."

"Exactly. You've got nothing to complain of, and I could feel the same way myself, if it wasn't for poor Alice. Bill, I must find out what has become of that girl. I'll never leave these Indians till I do."

"I don't believe you will leave here, then," replied Bill, "for it's my opinion that you like the life first rate."

"You're dead wrong there," said Dick, "for we are going to leave right away now."

"What do you mean?"

"Just that we are going on a raid, that's all."

"With you as chief, Dick?"

"You bet."

"Gosh, this is great! I never thought I should turn into a redskin when I left Kansas, hang me if I did. Guess if I had I should have stayed around home."

Dick laughed, and hurried off to join Jumping Gopher, the young buck who had fed them when they were first brought to the Indian camp.

"Hello, Gopher, where are the horses, all ready?" he asked.

"All ready," replied the Gopher. "We can start any time now."

"You are sure you know where the Black Riders have hidden themselves?"

"Of course I am. I never make a mistake, and I'll tell you something else, Dick—something that you want to know."

"What?" asked Dick in a whisper, for Black Wolf was coming toward them.

"We sent the white squaw to Joaquin Matanzas that night, in exchange for one of our men who was captured. Black Wolf did not want you to know, for fear— See you later. Here he comes."

Jumping Gopher, who was a half-breed, and had lived in Salt Lake and several of the Arizona towns, had caught his own share of slang, but Dick liked him, and we may say right here that the Gopher had taken a tremendous fancy to Dick. When Dick, as soon as he had made himself a bit solid with the tribe, proposed to raid the Black Riders for the secret purpose of recovering Major Remington's stolen cash, the Gopher fell right in with the idea, and now all the arrangements being made to carry it out, shortly after noon a party of forty Warm Spring Navajos, mounted on fine horses, with Dick at their head, filed out of the valley and started to ascend the mountain trail. Wild shouts followed them as they dashed out of the Indian village. For the first time in almost as many years as Dick Dare had lived, the tribe was following in the lead of its hereditary chief. Dick felt his importance somewhat, it must be admitted. He was wild with anxiety to rescue Alice Duvar from the Black Riders, if the Gopher's story proved to be true. They kept on up the mountain and passed down into the canyon, filing through one after another until at last they came upon the "Trail of the Indian Chief."

"Say, this is where we were before," remarked Bill, who rode alongside of Dick. "This is the old stage road."

"That's what it is," replied Dick. "Which way do we go now, Gopher—back up the canyon, where we were captured?"

Before the Gopher could reply Black Wolf suddenly called out in Navajo for a halt. Dick reined in and threw a keen glance around.

"It's up there," he said. "That's what you see, Black Wolf."

"The chief's eyes are as sharp as his father's were before him," replied Black Wolf. "Yes, there they come."

Away up on top of the divide Dick had caught sight of a company of mounted men moving toward the canyon. He pulled out his field-glass, which had been restored to him with his other belongings, and fixing it to his eyes, took a long, careful look.

"Well, what does the chief see through the long spectacles?" asked Black Wolf.

"Plenty of palefaces, and some Indians, too,"

replied Dick. "I think they are the Black Riders. Look and see what you think of them, Wolf."

Black Wolf tried the glass.

"They look just as near as if they were close to us," he said. "Yes, that is Joaquin Matanzas. If the chief says the word we shall make the attack."

"I do say it," replied Dick. "Joaquin Matanzas robbed me of money which was put in my care for safe keeping. I must get it back again. I know you will all help me. We will go forward now."

On they dashed until they reached the foot of the rise, when Dick suddenly turned aside into the rift which led to the hidden canyon.

"We'll wait here for them," he said. "They know the short cut to their new hold-out now, and will be sure to come this way."

He ranged his men along the walls of the canyon in two rows, the deep shadows of the towering cliffs completely hiding them from the view of anyone entering the rift.

"Does the chief say kill, or is it only to capture?" asked Jumping Gopher as the Black Riders came clattering down the hill.

"Capture," replied Dick. "Dead men cannot talk, and I want to know where my friend's money is; and besides that," he added, dropping his voice to a whisper, "I want to know something else—you know what, Gopher."

"White squaw," replied Jumping Gopher. "Oh, yes."

"Ready!" breathed Dick. "Hold your rifle up as though you meant business, Bill Struthers!"

Bill's teeth were chattering already. It looked decidedly like a fight now, for as Dick spoke the Black Riders, headed by Joaquin Matanzas, turned into the rift.

CHAPTER VII.—Dick's Desperate Leap.

Although it was altogether a new thing for Dick the half-breed to find himself in command of a band of Indians, he took to it as naturally as a duck takes to water. He gave his orders to his followers, told them just what to do and how to do it, and this in a way which showed them that he expected to be obeyed.

"Don't fire a shot until they are within twenty feet of us," he said. "What we want to do is to surprise them and, if we can, make a thorough job of it. We shall have the Black Riders just where we want them, but if there is any sudden dashing out and shouting, we shall accomplish nothing at all."

Now, don't think that Dick expressed himself in just these words, for it is not so.

Like the recollection of some forgotten dream, the memory of the Navajo language was returning to the half-breed boy. It is said that no one can ever forget the language learned in childhood. Certainly it was so in Dick's case. Already he could understand every word the Indians said, and he was beginning to be able to say a good deal in return. Thus his speech to the Indians was half Navajo and half English. It was enough that his dusky followers understood.

So they waited in the shadows of the rift for Joaquin Matanzas to bring his Black Riders down the trail of the Indian chief into the canyon. They were rapidly descending the mountain side, and

Dick saw that it would not be long before he would have a chance to show the Warm Spring Navajos how their chief would fight. Have we described Dick's dress? If not let us do so now. Dick looked like a full-fledged Indian. He wore a buckskin suit all decked out with feathers and beads, and around his neck was a string of bear's teeth which old Deefa, the medicine man, had given him before they left the camp.

Deefa told him that this was a charm which would protect him from all danger, and that it had once been the property of Dick's father. It was with a feeling of pride that Dick hung it about his neck. He determined to wear it always. Already the young half-breed was beginning to feel proud of his strange position, and when old Deefa took off his hat and threw it away, and fastened two eagle feathers in his hair, Dick felt his heart swell within him. He determined to be worthy of his father, and to show these Indians that a half-breed could make as brave a chief as one of the full Navajo blood. But Bill Struthers did not altogether relish these changes.

"Gosh, Dick!" he remarked, as they sat there on their horses, "you look just like as if you had escaped from some dime museum, hang me if you don't! Why don't you take them feathers out of your head and put on your hat like a Christian?"

"Not while I'm a chief, Bill," laughed Dick. "Do you know what I'm going to do when I get full control of the tribe?"

"No; what?"

"Pass a law that the first lieutenant shall wear feathers in his head, too."

"Gosh! I won't do it. I ain't no chicken—no."

"Show that you are not when it comes to the fighting, then."

"You bet I will. I'm as brave as they make 'em. Just let me get one crack at Joaquin and I'll show you—"

"Hist! Hist! They are right here!" called Jumping Gopher, who was watching at the end of the rift.

"Great gosh! Don't get away from me, Dick!" gasped Bill, turning pale. "I don't want to be left alone with these Indians—no!" Dick paid no attention to him, but moved forward and placed himself at the head of his little band.

"Twenty feet, Gopher!" he whispered. "Remember what I said—twenty feet."

"It's about that now," replied the Gopher, who was off his base and watching around the corner of the rocks. Suddenly Dick gave the war cry, which Black Wolf had taken pains to teach him, and went dashing out of the rift, followed by his band.

There were the Black Riders right ahead filing slowly down the trail of the Indian chief. Joaquin Matanzas was in the lead and before him on the saddle rode Alice Dewar. If anything was needed to spur Dick on—which was not the case—it was this.

"Fire! Charge!" he shouted in Navajo, and shots from many rifles rang out upon the night air. Instantly Joaquin called a halt and the fire was returned. It was sharp work for the moment, and then the band wheeled about and went dashing back up the trail. Dick had made a mistake and he knew it now.

If he had taken the band a little further up where the trail was narrow and it would have been impossible to turn he might have accomplished something, but as it was he began the attack just as the outlaws reached a spot where it was easy to turn their horses and where the dark shadows of the overhanging cliffs prevented anything like correct aiming on either side. The result was no one was killed, although a few were wounded, and now that the retreat had begun there was nothing left but to pursue.

Dick shouted to Alice; she heard him, recognized his voice and called back something which he could not understand. On he dashed, distancing the Indians, who were by no means as well mounted as the outlaws. Again and again Joaquin turned and fired at him. The bullets flew all around the young half-breed's head, doing no damage; but Dick did not dare to fire in return, for fear of hitting Alice.

Joaquin seemed to realize his advantage in this respect, for he kept swaying from side to side, so as to bring Alice within range. Weighted down by its double burden, the horse of the outlaw chief fell behind the others, while Dick, who was the best mounted of any one of the Indian band, was rapidly getting ahead of his followers and gaining upon the outlaw.

"I'll have have a shot in a moment," he thought, when Joaquin, turning again with a savage imprecation, discharged his revolver at Dick's head. It almost did the business, for the bullet knocked one of the eagle feathers out of Dick's hair.

Now Joaquin had reached the level. His band were some thirty or forty yards away, and Dick was rapidly gaining upon him, when all at once the outlaw turned his horse quickly to the left and sent him flying across a ravine hundreds of feet in depth. The horse barely succeeded in gaining a foothold. The loose sandstone crumbled beneath his hoofs, and as he scrambled to safety a large section of the disintegrated mass went crashing down into the ravine, widening the break by several feet.

"Follow if you dare," yelled Joaquin.

"Keep back, Dick! Keep back! Don't risk your life for my sake!" screamed Alice, and they disappeared down the slope on the other side. But there was no holding back about Dick Dare's make-up, and the fact that Jumping Gopher had urged his horse right up behind him made him all the more ambitious to prove his courage then.

With one wild yell, which might have done credit to his father, Dick urged his horse to make the leap. He gained the level across the ravine in safety, but his success was only for a moment. There was a loud cracking and Dick's horse began to rear and plunge. Then all in an instant the rock beneath the horse's feet slipped away.

"Look out!" yelled Dick, warning the Gopher, who was about to follow him, and down went horse and rider into the depths below.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Lone Hut in the Canyon.

Failure is an unpleasant thing to encounter at all times, but there are failures which might have been helped and others which come upon us too suddenly to be avoided. Dick's failure now

was one of the latter kind, and as he fell the boy thought that his failure was doomed to be his last. And so it would surely have been had it not been for one thing.

The rock went down in one great mass, and held together as it fell until some fifty feet or more below it struck a projecting ledge and broke into a thousand pieces. Strange to say, this saved Dick Dare and his horse, too, for the horse landed on the ledge and was able to hold his position. The shock was fearful, but it saved Dick. There the horse stood, trembling, but safe and sound. Dick was now safe for the moment, but it was only for a moment, unless he made a move.

The ledge upon which he had landed was only a mere projection from the wall of the ravine, which at any moment might crumble away. Looking at the rocky wall on his right Dick saw a wide opening, with the stars shining through it. It was one of those natural breaks so common in the mountains of Colorado. Beyond might lie another ravine or there might be a trail leading down. Dick took his chances and turned his horse into the break, finding himself in a moment upon a steep trail down into a canyon.

"Safe!" he muttered. "This is the way Joaquin went, and I'll bet on it. I shall have to let the Indians go for the time being. My work now is to rescue that girl if I can." He listened and thought he could distinguish the beat of horse's hoofs far down the trail. Urging his horse on, Dick descended the mountain at break-neck speed. The sounds ahead of him dying away as he advanced, when he reached the floor of the canyon all was still. Dick looked around curiously. The moon had just risen above the rocks; it was as bright as day.

"Never was in this canyon before," muttered the boy, "and I've done the mountains pretty well, too. Of course, it must come into the old chief's trail somewhere, but just where I can't understand." Dick now dismounted and gave the frightened horse a good rubbing down with his hands. The poor brute was in perfect lather and trembled fearfully. Dick led him to where a stream of pure, cold water came gushing out of the rocks and encouraged him to drink, and when he had taken all he wanted, he mounted and rode on up the canyon.

"I mustn't desert the Indians, and I don't intend to," he thought, "but I'm going to look along here a bit. I certainly heard a horse before I came down." His idea was that Joaquin Matanzas must have come down into this canyon, and was now ahead of him, and he was quite right in his supposition. If he had looked down a bit sooner he could have seen Joaquin dashing along the canyon with Alice still with him in the saddle, but all was silent now, and as Dick advanced he saw nothing of the outlaw. What he did see after a few moments was a lonely hut built in a sort of niche in the rocks, as uninviting and desolate a place as he had ever laid eyes on, but a light burned in the window and this made Dick the more determined to find out who could have taken up his residence in such a lonely spot.

"If I drive up to the door it will be a dead give away," he thought. "I might as well leave the horse here and have a quiet look before I let them know that anybody is around." He was

not long in finding a convenient spot, for he soon came to a break in the rocks, where there was a little sheet of water and a few cottonwoods occupying a sort of hollow where the ledge retreated a few hundred yards. Dick dismounted, hobbled his horse and turned him loose to graze on the grass, and then stole on toward the hut.

As he drew near he saw that the light had greatly increased in brightness. It flashed and glowed upon the window panes, the reflection lighting up the rocks on the opposite side of the canyon with dazzling brilliancy. This was all very mysterious. Dick saw that there must be something unusual going on inside. He crept up to the window and tried to peer in, but it was no use, for a shade was drawn down. The shade was not heavy enough to interfere with the reflection of the light much, but it was too thick to enable Dick to see a thing through it.

As he stood there he heard voices talking inside, and then came the sound of some one pounding on metal. The ring of the hammer continued for some minutes, and then there was a great sizzling as though hot metal had been thrown into water. All at once some one broke out into a wild boisterous laugh, long continued. Then suddenly the light was shut off to a mere glimmer, such as a candle or lantern might make, after which all was still.

"This beats the band," muttered Dick. "I wonder what in the world can be going on in there?" He thought the time had come for him to knock on the door and find out, and he was reassured by seeing nothing of the outlaw's horse nor any place where a horse could be kept. Dick accordingly knocked on the door and stood back waiting for a reply. The instant he knocked he heard a great shuffling about inside the hut. There were sounds of confusion generally. Then he heard a heavy footstep advancing toward the door and a voice called out:

"Who's there? Who's there?"

"I want to see the boss here!" answered Dick. "I'm the mail carrier—it's all right." When he said it he forgot that he was in Indian dress, and the recollection returning to him, he realized that his unfortunate speed was liable to get him into trouble. His hand was on his revolver while bolts and bars were being loosened. Suddenly the door was thrown open and an immensely tall man, certainly six feet four or five inches in height, stood before him. His face was old and wrinkled, and a long white beard reached almost to his waist.

"Ah, you red fiend!" he yelled, flashing the light of a lamp upon Dick and at the same time with his disengaged right hand whipping out a revolver. "You will, will you? Haven't I warned you all often enough not to come here and bother me?" Up went the revolver, and Dick was covered before he knew it.

"Take that, you lying whelp!" yelled the old man, and the revolver was discharged in Dick's face.

CHAPTER IX.—Dastardly Work.

To what good fortune Dick Dare owed his escape from death at that moment unless, it was the old man's poor eyesight he could never under-

stand. Before the old fellow had a chance to fire a second shot, Dick jumped on him and wrenched the revolver out of his hand.

"Hold on! Don't you go for another!" he exclaimed, as the old fellow started back into the hut. "If you do, I'll fire! Look at me, boss! I'm no Indian. I'm the mail carrier. You've often met me on the Trail of the old Chief." The old man shaded his eyes with his hand and surveyed Dick curiously. He took his time about it, too, considering that Dick had him covered, acted very coolly.

"Yes," he drawled at last, "you're Dick the mail boy. What you dressed up in Injun clothes for?"

"That's a long story," replied Dick. "I've seen you before, old man, but I never knew your name."

"Yes, I've seen you many a time on the trail. You must've seen me."

"You always carried a bag on your back."

"That's right."

"When I spoke you never made any answer. You just looked at me and passed me right by."

"That's right, too. I have no time to talk to strangers, and don't want to even if I had. Tell me, boy, what's your business here. Spit it right out, for I've no time to talk now." Dick hardly knew what to say, and he was just turning the matter over in his mind when the old man suddenly seized hold of him again and tried to take the revolver away again. He didn't get it, however. Dick was entirely too quick for him.

"Now, then, that settles it!" he cried. "I was just going away to leave you alone, old man, but now I'm coming in to see what sort of ranch this is. Stand one side unless you want trouble!"

"You shan't come in! You shan't!" shouted the queer old fellow, stamping with rage.

"Don't hurt him, Dick!" called a sweet voice from the top of the short flight of stairs, which led up to the story above. "Don't hurt him. He is an old man. Don't raise your hand against him for my sake." It took Dick's breath all away. There stood Alice Duvar looking down at him quietly enough.

"Alice!" he stammered. "You here?"

"Yes, here and not harmed one bit," replied the girl, adding: "Father, this is Dick Dare, the young man I told you about. Surely you would not refuse him shelter under your roof?"

"Well," growled the old man, "you are the fellow who has turned Injun chief, are you? Yes, I knew you were a half-breed as soon as I seen you. Well, you did something for my daughter, and I don't want to be ugly. When I fired at you I thought you were an Injun. You can come in, I suppose, and have a bite and a bed, too, if you want it, for Alice's sake. Come along."

If it had not been all for Alice's sake it is doubtful if Dick would have cared to take his chances in the hut, much as his curiosity was aroused. Alice came down the stairs and shook hands warmly.

"Dick Dare, I'm a thousand times obliged to you for what you tried to do for me," she said, frankly. "I own there is a mystery about all this which I've no doubt is puzzling you."

"It is; it puzzles me a lot," replied Dick, "but I don't care for that. I'm only too glad to see you safe."

"I was coming here, anyhow, but by another road," said Alice. "It was awfully brave in you to do as you did, but it wasn't necessary, for Joaquin had agreed to take me to my father. When I saw you take that leap I thought I should go crazy, for I felt sure it would be the death of you, and now here you are, and don't seem to be hurt a bit, but I suppose your horse was killed."

"No, he wasn't. He's all right," replied Dick. "I see I can't do anything for you. I don't think I'll stop."

"Oh, you must stop and have something to eat with us. I'll get up some supper in a few moments."

"No, thank you. It was only on your account I came in. Since you don't need me, I'll get back."

"Don't be in a hurry, Dick. Is it true what I hear, that you have been made chief of the Warm Spring Navajos?"

"Yes, it is."

"I'd like to know about it. Those Indians treated me so well that I feel an interest in them. Stay, Dick. Stop here till morning and tell me about it. There are only father and I. Joaquin Matanzas has gone on up the canyon, I assure you. He won't return." She seemed very anxious to have him stay, and Dick allowed himself to be urged into it. He was all the more willing since the old man had taken himself off somewhere.

When he entered the hut he could see nothing to account for the light nor the strange sounds he had heard. It was just a plainly furnished room, such as any miner might have in his cabin. Alice threw some wood upon the glowing coals in the big open fireplace, and preparations for supper were soon under way. Dick began to feel at home and told of the strange events which had occurred after he parted with Alice at the Indian camp, but when he came to ask Alice about herself, he did not get much satisfaction.

"I'll tell you all about it in the morning, Dick," was all she would say. Pretty soon supper was put on the table, and a very good one it proved to be. The old man now came in and joined them. He was civil enough, but did not have much to say. In fact, it was Alice herself who did most of the talking, and she kept it up for an hour or more, but never a word about her own affairs escaped her lips. At last the old man took the lamp and lighted Dick up to a room in the loft, where there was a comfortable bed.

"We'll talk over matters in the morning," he growled. "There's something maybe I'd like to have you do for me, and I'm going to pay for it. I'll show you how how to get Major Remington's money back from Joaquin." He had said this three times before, and it was this fact which induced Dick to remain in the hut all night. After a little, Dick, after bolting the door, threw himself down upon the bed without undressing, with his mind made up not to go to sleep, but, like many another person who has made the same decision, he did just the opposite.

In short, Dick was asleep before he knew it, and the next he did know he suddenly awakened with the unpleasant consciousness that there was some one with him in the room. He started up in a fright. It was pitch dark, and in the dark-

ness he could hear the sound of heavy breathing.

"Who's there? Who's there?" demanded Dick, feeling in his pocket for a match. Before he could find it there was a rush in the darkness and strong arms seized the mail boy by the throat and threw him back upon the bed.

"Quick! Show a light, Alice!" growled a deep voice. "I've got him!"

CHAPTER X.—Rescued by Jumping Gopher.

Once more Dick the Half-breed found himself within an inch of death.

"Alice! Alice! Don't let him kill me!" he gasped, as the grip on his throat became tighter and tighter.

The answer was a groan, and then something was thrown against the wall with great force. There was a crack of glass, and Dick's unseen assailant, who he had no doubt was the mysterious owner of the hut, but into a torrent of abuse. The next Dick knew the window was thrown up and a dark form sprang into the room. Dick saw the rush and heard the wild yell which followed it. He knew that the newcomer, whoever he might be, had jumped on the man who was choking him, and that was about all he did know for the next few moments, for the fact was Dick was pretty nearly choked to death already, and off he went into a state of unconsciousness.

When his senses came back to him some one was bending over the bed shaking him violently and calling, "Wake up! Wake up!" in his ear.

Dick opened his eyes and stared around. There was a lamp burning on the table, and Jumping Gopher was bending over him.

"Hello, Dick," said the half-breed, in the familiar way in which he had taken to addressing his chief.

"Oh, is it you, Gopher?" gasped Dick. "What's the matter with me? Why, I believe I was half choked to death. They would have killed me if you hadn't come."

"Yes; so they would," replied the Gopher, "and so would I have killed them if they had not given me the slip. Where they go, Dick? Ugh! Nice girl! She help kill you. God thing the Gopher come."

"You saved my life, that's all," said Dick, sitting up. "I shan't forget this, Gopher. I can't tell you where they have gone. I don't know anything about it, but I do know that Alice tried to save me. See, it was she who threw that lamp at her father's head."

"Her throw that?" demanded the Gopher. "I hear when I came in by window. I thought you throw."

"No, no," said Dick, "it was Alice. 'Where are they, anyhow? Come, Gopher, we must find them. I am all right now.'"

He caught up the lighted lamp and led the way downstairs, the Gopher following him, talking all the while.

He told Dick how he came to be there. It seemed that he knew a way down into the ravine, and he lost no time in descending to the bottom. Not finding Dick nor the horse, he remembered the ledge and made up his mind that Dick had landed upon it and passed into the canyon. Then the Gopher retraced his steps and went into the

canyon himself and found Dick's horse, which discovery sent him to the hut. The door was open when he reached it, and Gopher declared that the old man and Alice were talking inside and planning to kill Dick, and that he climbed up on the rocks and came in by the window just in time to prevent it. Still Dick would not believe a word against Alice.

"It was the old man," he declared, "but the girl was not in it. Never mind. I've escaped, anyhow, thanks to you. Where did they go after you came in?"

"Old man he try to stick me with knife and then run away downstairs," declared the Gopher. "When I get downstairs he no there—that all I can tell."

They searched for them everywhere, but could not find the slightest trace of the singular couple.

"You know this man, Gopher?" asked Dick.

"Me see him many time," replied the Gopher; "me no know him name. Him live here one—two—three year. Make heap fire in lodge. Me see it many time from mountain. Why him make much fire me not know."

"Well," said Dick, "we have got the place to ourselves, anyhow, and we will have a good look around and then join them."

He then began a thorough search of the two rooms on the lower floor of the hut. He had not worked but a moment before he made a discovery. The partition between the chimney and the end wall of the hut when struck gave back a dull, hollow sound.

"There's an opening behind this, Gopher," declared Dick, striking the partition again.

"Yes," replied Gopher, "and there's iron, too. Listen, Dick! You no hear it ring?"

Dick had not noticed the ring, but when he struck the wall again and listened he thought he could distinguish the sound to which the Gopher referred.

"Here ought to be the secret spring which works that partition if it's movable," replied Dick, kicking at a curious iron knob which projected from the chimney close down by the floor. He had it just right. Immediately the entire bit of wall glided inward toward the chimney. It moved about three feet and then stopped, leaving an opening through which a man could easily pass. Jumping Gopher gave a cry of delight.

"Dick, you smart. You got big head!" he exclaimed. "This is the way they went."

"We can't tell about that, but we can go on in and see what we find," replied Dick, catching up the lamp and passing through the opening.

The Gopher followed him, then Dick heard him give a despairing cry.

"What's the matter?" he demanded, wheeling around.

"Look! Look, Dick!" cried the Gopher, and then Dick saw that the partition had closed behind them.

There was anything but a pleasant prospect, and while Dick and the Gopher were talking about it the Indian suddenly laid his hand on Dick's arm.

"Look!" he breathed, pointing to the wall opposite.

At the same instant Dick heard a strange, rattling sound, which sent him back with a jump against the iron door.

CHAPTER XI.—Captured in the Cave.

"A rattlesnake!" gasped Dick.

"Ugh! We soon fix 'em!" Gopher exclaimed. "Hold lamp, Dick. So! See. Watch!" and thus saying, Gopher made a dive for the nearest rattler, which was gliding toward him, and picked it right up.

In an instant he had strangled it, and the other two glided into a hole beneath the rocks.

"Gracious! How can you do that?" shuddered Dick.

"Easy," laughed Jumping Gopher, throwing the dead snake from him. "Very easy. See, Dick. Me git odders. Me great rattlesnake hunter—oh, yes!"

Thus saying the Gopher dropped on his knees before the hole and began making a buzzing noise not unlike the rattle of the snake itself.

"Will that draw them out of their hole?" asked Dick.

"Every time," chuckled the Gopher, and then he ran his hand into the opening and began pulling on the rock.

All at once something gave way and Jumping Gopher found himself lying on his back.

"Now, Dick!" he cried. "Anodder lodge here! Ho! Ho! Ho!"

The Gopher scrambled up and Dick pressed forward with the lamp. Sure enough here was another door, and there was quite a little room behind it. Dick saw that the loose, disintegrated rock had been cemented into an iron frame, making a door as strong as the rock itself, and one which no one could have distinguished from it without close observation. There was no sign of the rattlesnakes now, and when Dick flashed the light inside he saw that the room was filled with all sorts of curious things. There was an odd sort of portable furnace on three legs, with a big iron pot resting on it. Besides this, there were bottles and jugs and boxes and a great many curious flasks and beakers and various things which would have looked all right in a chemist's laboratory, but which seemed very much out of place here. Jumping Gopher was most curious to know what it all meant, but Dick could not tell him, and at last they gave up trying to fathom the mystery and started to explore the cave further. Dick carried the lamp and the Gopher glided on in advance, his moccasined feet giving back no sound. All at once he disappeared around a turn in the passage, and before Dick could get to the bend in the rocks he heard a curious noise—sounds like a scuffle.

"Someone has got the Gopher," he thought, and he drew his revolver and ran around the rocks only to run right into the arms of a dozen or more men armed to the teeth, who pounced upon him without the slightest ceremony, wrenched the revolver away, half choked the poor body and threw him down on his back. Jumping Gopher was in a similar fix.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! It's Dick the Mail Boy, rigged out as an Indian!" cried the man who held Dick down. "I told you so, fellers! I knowed him soon as ever I seen him sitting there on his horse that time. This buck is Jumping Gopher, of the Warm Springs. We may as well do him up right now, but the other one had better be taken to the boss."

Thus saying, he caught Dick by the collar and jerked him to his feet. Meanwhile the others were moving on through the cave with Jumping Gopher in their clutches. With true Indian stolidity the Gopher had never once opened his mouth since his capture, but once or twice he looked back at Dick as the men hurried him on through the cave. Dick made up his mind to keep his mouth shut, too. If that was the Indian style why he would follow it. This did not suit the man at his side.

"Why don't you speak, you young cub?" demanded he, throwing up his foot and giving Dick a sharp kick. "Open your mouth. Say something, garl blame you! What do you think of all this business? Do you know who I am?"

"No, but I'll teach you who I am," cried Dick.

With this terrible fist—and Dick's fist was a bad one to run against—he dealt the man a blow between the eyes which sent him reeling back against the rocks.

"I'm off, Gopher!" he shouted in Navajo. "Follow me if you can!"

The Gopher needed no other encouragement. With a dextrous twist of his foot Gopher tripped the fellow up and knocked over two others who stood in his way and went bunding back along the passage after Dick with great lepas, which showed how he had earned his name.

CHAPTER XII.—Dick Gets the Pay-Bag Back Again.

If Jumping Gopher was making good his name, so was Dick Dare. The lamp had been knocked out of Dick's hands and extinguished at the first attack, and the two big pine knot torches which the man had used to light up the cave would not now be seen. Dick did not altogether understand this. As he looked back he wondered why they could not see the light, but so it was, and after they had run on through the darkness for a minute or so the shouts seemed to die away in the distance and this sooner than they ought to have done if the two young half-breeds had been simply running back through the cave.

"Gopher! Gopher!" called Dick, stopping short at last. "Where are you, Gopher?"

"Here I am, Dick," was the reply, and with one big jump the Gopher was at Dick's side.

"Where are we? Surely we are not going back the road we came."

"No, Dick, this is anodder road."

"That's what I was thinking. Say, Gopher, those fellows were the Black Riders, weren't they?"

"Oh, yes! Maxey, he get you."

"Then you know him?"

"Sure. Dat Maxey. Dis cave deir hold-out. Oh, yes."

"It looks so," said Dick. "I suppose they were taking up a Joaquin. Well, we gave them the slip, and now we've turned off somewhere. Say, Gopher, we might go on wandering about here in the dark forever. I'm sure I don't know what to do."

"No," said the Gopher, in his most decided way. "No forever. Look, Dick! Dere light now!"

"By gracious, so there is!" cried Dick. "Why

in the world didn't I see it before. What do you suppose it can be?"

"More lodge," said the Gopher emphatically.

"Then we are looking out of the cave?"

"Yes."

"By gracious, we shall soon know. It's not so very far away, either. Come on, Gopher, we will soon see what this means."

They hurried forward, making as little noise as possible, and as they drew nearer to the light they saw that it burned behind what appeared to be a square opening in a cross wall of rock which cut off further advance.

"A window looking into the cave!" whispered Dick.

"More lodge there. More trail," breathed the Gopher, by which Dick understood him to mean that here was another hut built up against the cave and facing the trail further up the canyon. Dick put himself in advance now, and creeping up to the opening, looked through. He found that he was looking into a roughly furnished room where there were bunks against the wall and a lamp burning upon a table, by the side of which sat a large man, his head resting upon the table. It was Joaquin himself, and he was sound asleep. On the table was a whisky bottle and an empty glass, which showed the cause of his profound slumber, and something else was there, too, which was far more interesting to Dick. Great piles of greenbacks lay scattered about upon the table and on the floor lay Major Remington's pay-bag. Dick lost no time in explaining the situation to the Gopher, and they climbed in through the window, which evidently had been left open for ventilation, as the night was very warm. Holding up his finger for silence, Dick pointed to the bag, and, while the Gopher held it open he swept the money in. His heart was full of triumph as he stole toward the door, but the Gopher did not follow him.

"Dick! Dick!" he whispered, drawing a long, keen-bladed knife and flourishing it over the head of the sleeping man.

"No, no!" breathed Dick, and he made a motion to seize the knife.

Jumping Gopher jumped backward this time, and in doing so managed to overturn a chair, which fell with a crash to the floor. Up jumped Joaquin with a savage cry. He did not seem to see the Gopher, but he did see Dick. Like a flash he drew a keen-bladed bowie knife and sprang upon the boy.

CHAPTER XIII.—Headed Off in the Canyon.

Dick was ready for him, though. So was the Gopher. Our half-breed caught the wrist of the knife hand with his left hand and got in one stunning blow between the eyes with his right. Jumping Gopher, just as active, caught the knife and wrenched it away and tumbled Joaquin in a heap in the corner.

"Me scalp him, Dick! Me scalp him!" he cried, making a rush for the bandit leader, knife in hand.

Never in his life had Joaquin Mutanzas had a closer call. He would have been scalped with his own knife if Dick had not interfered.

"No, Gopher! No!" cried Dick. "Don't do it! Follow me!"

Jumping Gopher grumblingly obeyed. They ran out of the hut together and made a quick dash up the canyon. They ran on, Dick hardly knowing in which direction they were going, except that it was down the canyon and away from the secret hold-out of the Black Riders.

"Where do we go?" he asked Gopher at last. "Of course I want to take this money to the fort, and we must have horses in order to do it. Have you any idea where we are?"

Jumping Gopher declared that he knew all about it. Wait a minute, Dick, and you shall have horses," he said. "We can't very well get back to where ours was left, but I know where there are others, you bet."

They had not far to go before they came to a widening of the canyon. Here there was a stream which came rushing down over the rocks and went winding through a broad stretch of meadow land. It was just the place to pasture horses, and as many as thirty were to be seen in the moonlight.

"There they are," said the Gopher. "I've seen them here many a time before from the rocks up there. Shall we take them, Dick?"

"Two," replied Dick. "I shan't bother with the rest. What we want to do is to get to the fort."

"I wish we had a lariat," said Gopher. "I suppose I can catch a couple of them without one, but it will take time."

"Why, here you are," replied Dick, pointing to a number of fine lariats which hung suspended from the limb of a big cottonwood tree.

Dick dropped the bag on the grass and he and the Gopher each took a lariat and went to work. Dick amazed the Gopher with his skill, for he not only caught his horses first, but caught the other one, after Gopher made a miss of it. There was some little trouble with the horses at the start, but they soon got them tamed down, and, springing upon their backs, rode off as comfortably as if they had had saddle and bridle. They dashed down the canyon to its end, or rather to the point where it divided into two arms. Gopher declared that one led back to the hut where Dick had his startling adventure, while the other led to the trail of the Indian chief.

"Now, which way, Dick?" he asked. "To the fort, or do you still want to take that girl with you? It is just as you say."

"We can't go back," replied Dick emphatically. "It's to the fort. But hark! Don't you hear horses coming down from the trail?"

"Yes," said Gopher, after a moment.

"Who can be coming?"

"May be Navajos; may be the Black Riders. How can I tell?"

"Come on!" cried Dick, "perhaps we can find some place to hide further ahead."

They dashed on, the sounds growing louder as they advanced.

"We had better hide here," said Gopher, pointing to a place where the cliffs formed a sort of bow, which offered good shelter in behind them.

They ran their horses in and halted. On the other side of the rocks was the trail, and beyond the trail the stream, and beyond that again a narrow stretch of meadow. It was just the place for a camp, and inside of a few minutes Dick found it out, for down the trail a large body of Indians came dashing.

"Who can they be?" whispered Dick.

"They are Navajos from the other side of the

mountain, and some Apaches, too," replied Gopher. "Our deadly enemies, Dick. That big buck is White Eagle. He hates all our tribe; he would kill us in a moment if he knew we were here."

Gopher had scarcely explained when the big Indian ordered a halt. It immediately became evident that they meant to go in camp, for the Indians now turned their horses into the stream and started across to the meadow. All but White Eagle and two other bucks. They rode on down the canyon, making for the very spot where Dick and Gopher were hiding.

"We shall be discovered in one minute," whispered Dick. "Stand ready, Gopher. This means fight."

CHAPTER XIV.—Dick Doubles On His Enemies.

The first thing of all was to save the money. Dick dropped off his horse and jammed the bag into a cleft in the rocks, piling a few loose fragments over it to conceal what he had done. He had no more than accomplished this when the Indians went dashing by. Suddenly the bucks reined in their ponies and came to a halt. The darkness favored the two half-breed boys. Now, as the Indians stood they could not be seen, but to show themselves in the canyon might mean death. Gopher held up his hand for silence. White Eagle was talking in deep, guttural tones. He spoke in a dialect of the Navajo language. Dick could not make out a word, but Gopher understood all. For fully ten minutes the Indians continued to talk. Jumping Gopher crept close to the turn of the cliff and drank in every word. At last the conversation ceased, and he stepped back alongside Dick.

"They are going to attack the fort in the early morning," he said. "They think the money is there."

"Then it must be an old arrangement?"

"Yes; I judge by what White Eagle says that he and Joaquin fixed it up several weeks ago."

"I bet you what you like Joaquin meant to go back on him after he captured the bag, but what he will do now remains to be seen."

Dick now stole forward and peered around the bend. White Eagle and his bucks, still mounted, had stationed themselves directly across the canyon about a hundred yards away.

"I'm going to make a dash," determined Dick.

"I'm not going to stay penned in here, where, sooner or later, I'm bound to be discovered. That won't pay."

He determined to leave the money bag just where it was, and return for it later. "I must warn them at the fort," he thought.

To think was to act with Dick, and he lost no time in communicating his plan to Gopher.

"Good! Let us go," answered the half-breed.

"We shall be shot at, but—"

He flourished his revolver and looked fierce enough to alarm even Dick.

"If it ever comes to a hand-to-hand fight, there will be no holding back on Jumping Gopher's part," he thought, as he sprang from his horse.

Gopher followed his example, and for a moment they stood listening. The bucks were still talking among themselves, and to all appearance there could not be a more favorable time to move.

"Now!" breathed Dick.

At the same instant a great clatter of horses was heard further down the canyon, and a wild shout rang out.

"Joaquin is coming!" thought Dick, and away he dashed, turning into the canyon and flying forward at full speed.

Gopher followed him and they were instantly discovered. White Eagle gave a warwhoop which might have been heard a mile away, and then the shots began to fly. It was a perfect hail of lead for a moment. Dick saw that it would be the merest folly to try to use his revolver in return. All at once Gopher gave a yell and dropped backward off his horse. The frightened animal went bounding past Dick, who tried to pull his own horse in, so as to go to the assistance of the Gopher. He did not accomplish it. The next he knew his horse was shot from under him. Dick had just time to jump, and, throwing a little too much energy in his movements, he landed in the creek. This saved him. The Indians came flocking back, and up behind them Joaquin and his riders, armed to the teeth, dashed upon the scene.

"We want that boy!" shouted the big bandit. "Where did he go to? Don't let him escape you, White Eagle. Find him. Find him and you shall have money enough to keep you in firewater for a year."

But it was one thing to want Dick and another to get him. Our half-breed was in the water now, swimming for all he was worth.

CHAPTER XV.—The Dead Man at the Gate.

"Where is he? Where is he?" roared Joaquin, pulling in as soon as he found Dick's dead horse, for seeing nothing of the boy he had no idea of letting him double on his pursuers, which, as we have seen, was exactly what Dick was doing, without having started in to do it. The bucks, aroused by the cries of Joaquin and the shouts of White Eagle to watch the creek, swarmed along its bank looking this way and that. Dick passed them in the darkness and then rose to the surface alongside a thick clump of cottonwoods just below the Indian camp. One glance backward told him what he wanted to know.

"I'm all right," he muttered. "I wish it was the same with poor Gopher."

He thought quick and determined to abandon his companion.

"Jumping Gopher is just as well able to take care of himself as I am, if he is still alive," he thought. "Anyhow, I can't help him. I only wish I could."

He now crawled on his hands and knees through the high grass toward the nearest of the Indian ponies, a handsome little black broncho which was feeding close by. Coming close to him, Dick spoke quietly to the pony, which pricked up its ears, and, after a minute, took a step or two nearer the crawling boy, for Dick plucked a handful of grass and held it out to him. The pony nipped at it and began to eat when Dick, leaping up, gained his back with one quick spring, and went dashing across the meadow, hoping to gain the deep shadows of the cliffs on the other side before he was discovered.

Dick was urging the pony on for all he was

worth when all at once White Eagle spied him. The yell which went up from the Indian band might have been heard a mile away, and Joaquin and his Black Riders were not slow about making their voices heard, too. The bucks ran for their ponies and the others dashed on along the trail to head Dick off if they could. Dick saw that his only chance was to cut in ahead of them. He therefore made a sharp turn and had his pony in the creek inside of a minute. The next and he was in the canyon speeding the pony for all he was worth. Dick was ahead now. He rose in the saddle, looked back and waved his hat at his pursuers. A shower of shots was the answer, but Dick dashed on around the turn of the canyon unharmed. Inside of three minutes he was lost in the darkness, and a little later he gained the trail of the Indian chief in safety and ventured to slacken speed.

It was a good five miles on to the fort and Dick let no grass grow under his feet. As Dick dashed up to the fort he could see no one stirring outside the high stockade. Beyond the stockade nothing could be seen, for the fort itself was a long, low building with not even the chimney showing behind the fence.

"Where's the sentry, I wonder?" thought Dick. "This is strange. I never knew them to be without one."

The thought had scarcely crossed his mind when the pony suddenly shied, nearly throwing Dick from his back.

"Good heavens! What's that?" gasped the boy, pulling in the pony and hastily dismounting.

It was the sentry, stone dead. His rifle was missing and Dick, to his horror, saw that the poor wretch had been scalped.

"They are at it already," thought the boy. "Are they all asleep inside or dead, or what?"

"Hello, the fort! Hello! Hello!" he shouted, at the top of his lungs.

There was no answer. Dick hurried to the gate and beat a lively tattoo. All at once there was a rushing sound overhead and an arrow buried itself in the stockade. Another and another followed. Dick jumped away, but not quick enough to avoid the fourth, which grazed his side and fell to the ground. As he looked toward the rocks opposite the stockade he saw a dusky figure peering out from behind them, and still another arrow came whizzing toward him out of the gloom.

CHAPTER XVI.—Dick Makes a Bold Dash.

"Hello, there! Hello!"

Just at the critical moment, when the arrows came whizzing about Dick, a voice was heard behind him, calling from the direction of the stockade. Dick missed an arrow in the back by turning and making a dash for the fort. The gate he could see was slightly open, and there was room enough for him to slip through. A frightened-looking man in the dress of one of Uncle Sam's defenders hastened to close and secure the gate behind him.

"Say, you're the mail boy, hain't you?" he demanded. "If you're a spy, look out for yourself! You'll never get out of here alive."

"I'm the mail boy, all right," answered Dick. "If you are so much afraid you ought to have

found that out for sure before you let me in, it seems to me."

"The major saw you through the peep-hole," replied the regular. "He said you were the mail boy, and I've got to obey orders. Here he comes. He can speak for himself."

Major Remington came hurrying out of the principal house inside the stockade with a Winchester rifle in his hand.

"Good heavens, Dick, is it really you?" he exclaimed. "Everybody thought you were dead."

"Not by a long chalk," replied Dick. "Do I look it? What must you think of me, major? Don't say a word till I explain."

"I don't want any explanation to make me believe in your honesty, Dick, but hold on before you talk about that. How many Indians are outside there?"

"More than I can tell you, major. There seems to be a lot of them by the way the arrows came flying at me, and there's a lot more coming, and the Black Riders are with them. I came to warn you. The money's not a sure case, either. I must explain."

Dick would have his say on all occasions. The major wanted to talk about Indians, but Dick insisted on telling his strange story first and as usual he had his way.

"It's all right, my boy," said Major Remington, after he had finished. "As far as my interests are concerned you have acted for the best. I tell you frankly, Dick, I gave up all hope of ever seeing the money again, but I never for an instant thought you were to blame."

"Thank you, major. If I have turned into an Indian chief I don't forget my friends," Dick replied.

"I don't know about this Indian chief business. You are too bright a boy for such nonsense as that. However, that's your affair and not mine. We are in trouble here. Captain Conover has taken all his men but three over into the San Pedro valley to look after some striking miners who are kicking up a row. Joaquin must have got wind of it and taken the opportunity to organize an attack on the fort. That scoundrel is my bitter enemy, Dick. He has sworn to kill me. It's an old quarrel between us and one which wouldn't interest you if I was to tell it. He'll capture the fort and have us all massacred if he gets the chance, though. On that you may depend."

"You know that one of your men is dead—the sentry!" replied Dick.

"Yes. He was shot and scalped half an hour before you came. There were about twenty Indians who made an attack on the gate. They killed poor Reynolds before we could help him. We gave them a dose, though, and drove them back. I supposed then that they were waiting for reinforcements; I am sure of it now."

"I'm going out to get Reynolds' body."

"Not alone. My men won't go, and I must confess I don't care about undertaking the contract for myself."

"I'll act alone, then. All I want you to do is to guard the gate and hold me covered while I make the dash."

"We can do that, but I hate to have you risk your life so."

"I'm a half-breed, major. What Indian ever

fears to risk his life? I'm sure my father wasn't the one. I'm going now."

The major whistled, and a second man came hurrying out of the fort. He was only the cook, but he proved to be as good a hand at a rifle as any soldier in the service. Henry, the inside sentinel, threw open the gate and Dick walked boldly out. There was not a soul to be seen as the brave boy approached the corpse. Dick seized the dead man by the shoulders and started backward, dragging him along, when all at once a dozen Indians sprang out from behind the rocks. It was arrows and bullets then, a perfect shower of them, but Dick never dropped his ghastly burden.

"Fire!" he cried. "Let them have it."

Three rifles cracked and two Indians dropped. With fierce yells the others came dashing on, separating as they advanced, so as to avoid the fire from the gate, at the same time peppering away at Dick.

CHAPTER XVII.—Defending the Fort.

"In with you! In with you, quick!" shouted Major Remington, as Dick drew near.

It was a terrible ordeal for the boy. Panting under his burden, he drew poor Reynolds through the gate just as the Indians were ready to make their final rush to close around him. The major and his men got in two more rounds and Wiggins brought a second man down. Then the gate was slammed shut in the face of the Indians and securely barred.

"Brave boy!" cried the major. "By thunder, Dick, you've done it! Poor Reynolds! Well, he's a goner! It will be a close call for us, too, I'm afraid. Hear those red devils! Heaven save us, what a noise they make! We've winged three of them and they'll never let up now! Are those some of your Navajos, Dick?"

"Not mine," replied Dick. "They belong to another branch of the tribe. They are my father's people, though, and it goes against the grain to see them killed."

"Wish they were all in blazes," muttered the major. "Excuse me for saying it, Dick, but I can't help it. There, they seem to have quieted down now. Wonder what's in the wind?"

Henry and Wiggins were carrying the body of poor Reynolds into the fort as the shouts outside suddenly ceased.

"That means mischief," said Dick.

"I'm quite ready to believe you," replied the major, "but what? Look! Look!" he cried in the same breath. There was a streak of light overhead and a blazing arrow went whizzing over the stockade, narrowly missing the roof of the fort.

"So that's their game," said Dick. "Well, it's a miss, anyhow. There comes another! By gracious, it's stuck in the shingles. There'll be trouble now!"

The roof will be ablaze in a minute, that's what!" cried the major. "Henry—Wiggins! A bucket of water, quick!"

Henry and Wiggins came running out, and, each seizing buckets, made for the spring.

"Let it go! She's out!" shouted Dick. "That's only a ruse! To the gate! To the gate!"

His sharp ears had caught sounds which reached no one else.

"Stand ready!" he said. "They are going to

try their hand at the gate. We want to give them a warm reception if we expect to live."

He had no more than spoken when something struck the gate with fearful force.

"I thought so!" said Dick. "So that's their game! I heard them rolling that stone. We'll get another in a second. There you are!"

Again the heavy stone was hurled against the gate. It bulged and shook. Its builders had not made it to withstand any such shock, and, moreover, the fort was old and the wood rotten. Dick saw that the gate had to go.

"Look out for the third," said Dick. "Stand ready."

They had not long to wait. Once again the big rock was hurled against the gate, and this time it did the business. The hinges snapped, and the bar broke in two, the gate falling inward and half a dozen Indians, yelling like demons, rushed through the breach. All four fired simultaneously, for Dick took care that they should be ready. Two Indians fell wounded, but the others rushed on, while Dick and his companions retreated toward the fort, firing as they went. Another Indian dropped and this turned the tide. The three who remained managed to get in one round with their rifles, doing no damage, and then beat a hurried retreat. Dick sprang after them.

"Follow it up! Follow it up!" he shouted.

They all rushed out through the broken gate and the wounded Indians followed them, crawling away into the darkness. This bold move on Dick's part sent the Navajos in full retreat to the rocks. Just as Dick was about to start back a horse was heard in the distance coming down the canyon.

"A woman!" cried Major Remington.

"Alice!" gasped Dick. "She'll have to pass them! This will never do!"

He saw the girl's danger, for her way lay directly past the rocks behind which the Navajos had retreated.

CHAPTER XVIII.—About the Girl Who Hid Under the Table.

If Dick had not been absolutely fearless of danger he would most certainly have followed the major and his men back to the shattered gate. But Dick was not that kind. He ran boldly on toward the approaching horse, which, frightened at the firing, had stopped and was jumping about wildly. There was a despairing yell and the fair rider slipped from the saddle. Her foot caught in the stirrup and she was being dragged along, the horse making a wild dash ahead, when Dick sprang in front of the frightened beast, caught him by the bridle and brought him to a halt.

"Help! Help! Help! Save me!" she shrieked.

Dick disengaged her foot and was in the act of helping her up when a bullet took the horse, and the poor brute fell over almost without a groan.

"On to the fort, Alice! Fly!" cried Dick, seizing her arm and hurrying her forward.

She pulled herself away and ran like a deer, gaining the gate before Dick could overtake her. Major Remington had not been idle. He had managed to find another bar, and a hammer and strong nails were ready.

"In with you!" he shouted, and even as he

spoke a shot lodged in the woodwork over his head. Dick bounded in and the gate was pushed back into position, where Wiggins hastily put the new bar into place.

"By gracious, Dick, you've got a harder nerve than any fellow I ever saw!" he exclaimed. "How can you face fire as you do?"

"Guess it's in the blood," panted Dick, all breathless.

"I wish I had a regiment of just such fellows as you under my command," added the major.

"Wish you had any other kind of fellows. Where did she go, major? Where did she go?"

"The girl? Bless if I know. Never saw anyone half so scared in all my life. She made a bee line for the fort. Great Scott! how she did run, and her skirts all dropping off her, too."

Dick started for the fort, wondering what had come over Alice all of a sudden. The open door of the mess room was right in front of him, and Dick dashed in. A swinging lamp hung over the long table, but he could see nothing of Alice until all at once there was a dismal groan under the table and Dick caught sight at the corner of a dress sticking out.

"Alice! Alice!" he called.

"Oh, Dick! Gosh ermighty, don't let them get me! Oh, gee! I wouldn't have come if I'd a-thought they was going to make a target outer me!" was the answer that came back.

"Come out of that!" shouted Dick.

He caught hold of a foot which projected from under the dress and dragged out, not Alice, but Bill Struthers, in Alice's clothes! With the skirts all dropping off of him and his teeth chattering, that famous Indian fighter stood before Dick shaking from head to foot.

"Well, I declare!" cried Dick. "Where in the world did you come from?"

"Why I—I—I came from Alice!" stammered Bill. "Say, she sent me to warn the folks at the fort that the Black Riders were coming down onto them. Gee! I had a deuce of a time getting in here, but I was too late, after all! What's that? What's that? I hear firing. Oh, they are coming, Dick. Hide me! Hide me! Don't let 'em get me. I wish I'd stayed with them Navajos, that's what I do."

"Stop your noise, you great idiot!" returned Dick. "What a row you are making. Where did you leave Black Wolf and the band?"

"Over in one of these yere canyons. I don't know jest which one, but I s'pose I could find it. I didn't want to live along with the Indians after you were dead, and that's what they all thought you were. I sneaked away and got a-wandering about till at last I struck a hut built up against the rocks. Alice was there and she put these clothes on over mine and hustled me away to the fort. Blame these skirts, anyhow. It was bad enough to ride in them, but when it comes to walking around I hain't in it—no."

"Come out here!" cried Dick.

Major Remington came hurrying in before Dick could get Bill outside.

"Hello! A boy instead of a girl! I thought as much," he exclaimed, meeting them in the doorway. "Where are you from, young man?"

"From Alice Dewar," answered Dick, speaking for Bill. "I haven't quite got at the bottom of the story yet, but Alice seems to have sent him

here to warn you that the Black Riders and the Indians are coming down upon the fort."

CHAPTER XIX.—The Hand-to-Hand Fight in the Fort.

"See anyone, Dick?"

"No, I don't, Major, but I don't doubt for a moment that they are there all right."

The enemy had hauled off for the time being and were lying low. Although there was nothing to be seen now, Dick could not doubt that both Joaquin Matanzas and White Eagle's band of Navajos were close at hand. There was no time to do any further talking. Down the canyon a big band of mounted men were coming. There were many Indians among them and many whites. Dick felt sure that he could make out Joaquin and White Eagle riding side by side.

"They're after your money, major," he said quietly. "Well, we can't do anything but run for it. Anyhow you fix it, they are bound to be fooled."

Bill Struthers, who had stripped off Alice's clothes, came whining around Dick, half silly with fear.

"Don't let them get me, Dick!" he exclaimed. "It's no use for us to try to fight them. The best thing we can do is to sneak out some other way and run for our lives."

"If ever a fool spoke sense you've done it," cried Dick. "Major, it is the very thing I was about to propose."

"Well, it can be done," replied the major; "it would be only a moment's work to cut through the palings on the other side."

"And where will that take us out to?"

"To the mouth of a cross canyon which, if followed, will lead us straight to the trail of the Indian Chief."

"By all means let's do it, then!" cried Dick. "Hark! Hear them beating on the gate; they are throwing another rock. The old thing can't stand that long."

No time was lost in putting the plan into action. Major Remington brought a crowbar from the house, and, with Dick's help, two of the palings of the stockade were pried off.

"Slide out!" said Dick, but he had scarcely spoken when a dark form came sliding in.

It was an Indian in the full war dress of the Navajos. Bill Struthers gave a despairing yell and sprang back behind Dick. Major Remington threw up his rifle and would have fired, but Dick sprang in front of him and caught the Indian by the hand.

"Oh, Gopher!" he exclaimed. "You are still alive! Don't shoot, major! He's my friend!"

"You bet I'm alive," replied Jumping Gopher. "You need help, Dick? Well, I've brought it. Let those fellows come on. We'll show them what the Warm Spring Navajos can do."

Jumping Gopher whistled and another Indian stepped through the breach. It was Black Wolf. He saluted Dick gravely and gave a peculiar cry. Probably Major Remington was pretty well surprised at all this, but he had good reason to be more so a moment later, for Indian after Indian now came through the breach, each saluting Dick the Half-Breed as he entered the fort.

"Who are all these?" gasped the major. "What does this mean?"

"They are my tribe!" cried Dick. "Oh, it's all right now!"

"You bet it is, Dick!" exclaimed the Gopher. "We are here to fight for the chief."

It was a proud moment for Dick when he put himself at the head of his band.

"Shall we wait for them to come or shall we go out and attack them?" asked Black Wolf. "It shall be just as you say."

Before Dick could answer the gate fell in with a crash.

"Ready!" cried Dick.

Joaquin, who was first through the gate, did not see them, nor did White Eagle, who came close behind him. They were half way across the yard before they knew what they had to expect. Then Dick gave the Navajo war cry, which Black Wolf had taught him, and led his band out into the open. Instead of a mere handful of men to contend with, Joaquin found forty or fifty rushing upon him.

"Fire!" shouted Dick.

"Wipe them off the earth!" yelled the Gopher, in his excitement.

Then the bullets began to fly on both sides. The hand-to-hand fight in the fort had begun.

CHAPTER XX.—Caught in the Cave.

It was a desperate encounter while it lasted. Major Remington remained beside Dick and never wavered. All at once panic seemed to seize Joaquin, for he turned and dashed through the gate. White Eagle followed him, and then there was a grand stampede for the horses. In less than it takes to tell it what was left of the united band of Indians and Black Riders were dashing down the canyon. The attack on the fort had been a failure. Dick let them go, for he could not do otherwise, as his Indians had left their horses in the cross canyon behind the fort.

"To the horses!" cried the Gopher. "To the horses! We must follow them up before they have a chance to hide themselves."

"Yes," added Black Wolf gravely; "it is a bad day when the Navajos unite with such men as Joaquin Matanzas, but what does the chief say?"

"We will follow them up," said Dick. "Black Wolf, I have a sacred trust to fulfill. I promised to take care of the money belonging to the great father at Washington. We must find it and deliver it to Major Remington. I shall never rest until it is done."

With the true grunt of an Indian, Black Wolf expressed his willingness to obey his chief, and led the way to where the horses had been concealed. Dick waited only to look up Bill Struthers, who was found hiding inside the fort.

"Is it all over, Dick? Have they gone?" gasped that famous Indian fighter, when Dick dragged him from his place of concealment.

"Yes, and I'll be gone in another minute," replied Dick; "if you want to follow me now is your time."

Bill hurried after him as he left the fort. There had been no other delay except to look after the wounded. These were left in the fort, with two men to look after their wants. Dick had begged

Black Wolf to have no scalping, and his wishes were respected, so there were wounded men of both parties left behind at the fort when the little band finally rode off through the canyon hot on the enemy's trail. As they rode along Jumping Gopher told Dick how he had contrived to climb the rocks and make his escape after their encounter with White Eagle at the creek. Dick had his own story to tell, and after a while they came in sight of the scene of their startling adventures, but as yet no sign of the enemy.

"We let them get too big a start on us," said Dick, "but, of course, it could not be helped. Say, Gopher, do you suppose we shall find the money all right?"

"I am sure I can't tell you, Dick," replied the Gopher, "but there is one thing I do want to say."

"What's that?"

"If you want to make sure of the money you better give the bucks the slip."

"Hello! Do you think there is likely to be any trouble with them?"

"It's hard telling. Of course they won't make any trouble with you, for you are the chief, but I shouldn't want to guarantee that they would not follow up Major Remington. Which way does he propose to go in case he gets the money, Dick?"

"He declares that he will take it back to Denver and wait there with it until the country quiets down."

"Probably that will be the best way. Remember what I tell you now. This thing had better be done on the quiet."

"How will we manage it?"

"Order the men to push ahead, say as far as the hut at the mouth of the cave, and wait for us there."

"Will they obey me?"

"Of course they will, Dick. You are the chief. They will do anything you tell them, but the sight of so much money may turn the heads of some of them, and for my part I should not want to be responsible for what might occur."

This advice seemed perfectly sound and Dick rode forward and gave the order to Black Wolf. The old Indian asked no questions, but simply obeyed, explaining to the others the wishes of the chief. Then Dick whispered his plan to Major Remington.

"Fall back when I do," he said. "We are past the place where the gold was hidden. I don't want the others to know."

The major took the hint, and when Dick fell behind, he dropped back, too. So did Bill Struthers and the Gopher.

"You can't shake me, Dick," said Bill, "coz why, I won't be shaken. I'm going to stick to you wherever you go."

"Come on, then!" exclaimed Dick, turning his horse. "Come on, all of you. We must lose no time. Once you've got the money and I've seen you safe on the road to Denver, I'm off to join my Indians."

"And to stay with them forever, Dick?"

"I don't know now. I may. I feel very much like it. It's better to be a big toad in a small puddle than a little toad in a big one a good sight. Here we are. It was in behind these rocks that I hid the bags."

Dick now dismounted and, leaving Bill to look after his horse, made his way in under the shelving rocks.

"That's an ugly looking hole," remarked the major. "Look out for yourself, Dick. The rock overhead is all broken up by the water; it's liable to fall at any minute."

"No fear!" cried Dick, and he disappeared in the darkness.

"Thunder! The bags are gone!" they heard him call in a moment.

"Gone!" gasped the major, and before he had time to say another word there was a report like thunder and, to Major Remington's unspeakable horror, a vast mass of loose rock came tumbling down from above, completely covering the opening through which Dick had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXI.—Dick in Deadly Peril.

It was a terrible shock to all hands. At first they had all they could do to get the horses back out of the way, and then the frightened animals had to be quieted down and secured. They were all left in charge of Bill Struthers, while Major Remington and Jumping Gopher, hastily dismounting, hurried back to see what had become of Dick. There seemed to be almost no hope that Dick could still be alive, for the amount of stone which had settled down over the opening was enormous. It was a perfectly hopeless case to think of digging Dick out, and the poor Gopher, who had already become very much attached to his boy chief, actually broke down and cried as the thought grew upon him that he should never see Dick again.

And yet for all that Dick was not dead—not even harmed in any way. Fortunately for him he had not found the bags where he had expected to find them. If he had done so he would undoubtedly have been killed. Not finding them he pushed on further, and so by great good fortune passed just beyond the line of the cave-in. But the shock was tremendous. Dick was thrown down with such force as to almost stun him. When he managed to scramble to his feet again, there he was shut up in that dark, narrow hole, without the slightest chance of escape as far as he could see.

"I'll never get out the way I came in," he thought, with a growing sense of horror creeping over him. "Tons of rock must have fallen over the opening. Confound it all, this is a bad job."

It was totally dark, of course, but Dick, by good luck, happened to have a box of matches about him. He lighted one as he groped his way forward, and as he did so his foot struck against something. Dick looked down and saw that he had made a highly important discovery. It was a pinon knot which lay in his path. This pinon is a sort of resinous pine which grows freely on the higher slopes of the Rocky Mountains. There is nothing in the world better for torches, and Dick hastened to make use of it for that purpose. Just as he was about to strike a second match he saw ahead of him, far in the distance, a point of light.

"Another torch!" he thought. "Hello! This may mean rescue. There's somebody ahead of me there."

He lighted the pinon knot and hurried forward as fast as possible, finding that what he had supposed to be a mere hole in the wall was really the opening of an immense cavern which led off under

the mountain, taking, as near as Dick could make out, the direction of the famous trail of the Indian chief.

As soon as Dick emerged into the cavern proper he could see the light ahead of him more distinctly, but he kept up the chase for fully half a mile over the sandy floor of the cavern before he knew exactly what it meant. Then he at last saw the bent figure of an old man staggering along under the weight of Major Remington's pay-bag, which was slung over his back, and carrying a lighted torch in his hand.

"Hello! Hello!" shouted Dick. "Hold on there! Wait till I come up!" Evidently the old man heard the cry, for he turned and looked back. Catching sight of Dick, he started forward on the run, making directly for a mass of rock which, as it proved, bounded the cavern on that side. Dick ran on and presently reached the spot. Here there was a narrow opening in under the rock not nearly big enough for him to stand upright in. He stooped down and crawled through, finding himself in a long narrow passage which wore a decidedly familiar look.

"It's the passage behind the old man's hut!" flashed over Dick. He could see no light in the passage, but he knew that in order to reach the hut he must go to the left, and he did it, coming in a few moments to its end. It was the same place. There were the doors behind which he and Jumping Gopher had discovered the rattlesnakes and that curious collection of chemical apparatus.

"You back again? What have you got, father?" he heard a woman's voice exclaim.

"Alice!" thought Dick.

"Money! Money! Lots of money!" was the answer. "Don't touch it. Let it be right there. It is better mine than another's, whoever it may belong to, for it will be devoted to a good cause—oh, yes! To a good cause."

"You've stolen it!" cried Alice. "It's the government pay-bag. You have seen Dick!"

"No, no, no! Nothing of the sort," mumbled the old man.

"Don't! Don't!" shrieked Alice. "I see it all now! Dick is outside. Don't murder him, father—don't!" What it all meant Dick, could not guess then, but he felt the result in an instant. Suddenly an electric shock struck him with fearful force. With one despairing cry Dick sprang into the air and fell, all doubled up upon the floor of the passage.

CHAPTER XXII.—The Mutterings of a Madman.

If Dick the Half-Breed had been anything but the stalwart fellow he was, there can be no doubt that the shock which he received in the cave behind the hut would have killed him outright, as Alice Dewar's father undoubtedly intended it should. Powerful electric wires ran along the floor of the cave, communicating with a place to be described later and controlled by a battery in the hut. If Dick had died from the shock he would not have been the first to meet death that way. This Alice knew perfectly well, and the thought drove her almost mad.

"Oh, you have killed him, father," she cried.

"Why did you do it? He never harmed you! He saved my life."

"Hush!" said the old man. "Hush, Alice! I warned you. I will not have that fellow or any other prying into my secrets here. The cause of science demands his death. He is dead—let him die!"

"No! No! It shan't be!" cried the girl. "Stand aside! Let me go to him! He may be still alive!" Then Alice sprang past her father and made a rush for the secret door. She never reached it. Old Dewar, who was really a dangerous lunatic, made one grab for his daughter and caught her around the waist.

"Oh, you will You will, will you? You will interfere!" he cried. "We'll see about that. Daughter or no daughter, I'll kill you, too!" His hands closed about her throat. The old lunatic choked her into unconsciousness and she fell at his feet.

"There! I had to do it!" he exclaimed. "Sorry, too, for Alice was a good girl before this young half-breed crossed her path. Not dead? Well so much the better. Tonight my great scheme will be accomplished, the dream of a lifetime realized. She must not interfere with me even if she is my daughter—no!" He moved past the secret door and pressed another of those mysterious hidden springs with which the hut was apparently so well supplied. Immediately a sliding panel moved back. Raising Alice in his arms, he carried her through the opening, returned, closed the door and stood alone in the room.

"Now for it," he muttered. "If my experiments prove successful I shall start right in building the plant at once. This money will serve to make the beginning, and if carefully managed will go a long way toward completing it." He opened the secret door leading into the cave and stepped inside. Touching a button an electric light flared up, making the cave as bright as day.

"Gone!" he exclaimed. "Gone! What is this? Where is the boy?" He could not see Dick, and yet he was there. When Alice gave that last despairing cry for help, Dick, whose senses were creeping back upon him, heard it, and, with a great effort, sprang to his feet.

Behind the secret door he could hear old Dewar talking to himself, and with his ear pressed against the partition he listened to every word. Alice was in danger. Where she was or just what the danger was that threatened her, Dick could not exactly make out, but he heard enough to make the situation plain in part.

"I must hide somewhere," thought Dick. "He'll be in on me in a moment. Whatever he's going to do I want to see, and I mean to, but in the meantime I must get out of the way." He remembered the secret room where the chemical apparatus was confined, and he had not forgotten about the secret spring, either. Stooping down, Dick touched it and the door flew back. Stepping into the room he closed the door behind him and was in the act of lighting a match when suddenly he heard a muffled voice calling his name:

"Dick! Dick! Is it you, Dick?"

"Alice!" cried Dick.

"Yes! Yes! You are in the laboratory?"

"I guess I am."

"And I am in the next room. Come in here, Dick. Don't lose a minute. Run your hand along

the wall on the right side; about two feet up from the floor you will find a button. Press it and the partition will open. Be quick!" Be sure Dick lost no time in obeying. He found the button without difficulty, and in a moment the road into Alice's prison was clear.

"Are you here, Alice?" he whispered, peering into the darkness.

"Yes. Stand aside! Now then. That closes the door. Hush, now. Not a word. There comes father. Lucky for you that you are out of his way." At that moment old Dewar passed into the cave outside. He clutched a long, keen-bladed knife in his hand.

CHAPTER XXIII.—Face To Face with Death

"Oh, Dick! What ill wind brought you here just at this time of all others," whispered Alice, as all grew quiet outside the secret doors.

"Well," replied Dick, "I am not here because I wanted to come, that's certain. Fate seems to have willed that I should come back again, Alice, and from what little I have seen and heard so far it seems to me that I was never more needed in my life."

"You are right," replied Alice, earnestly. "Dick, tonight for the first time my father turned on me and tried to kill me. I'm sure he meant to do it; perhaps he thinks he has succeeded. If you could only get me out of here and get away yourself, I'd give anything in the world."

"Why, it can be done, Alice," replied Dick, earnestly. "I'm not afraid of your father. I'm ready to fight for you if necessary, and—"

"No, no! I wouldn't have you hurt him for the world! Oh, Dick, he is mad! He has been mad for years. I've tried and tried to get him away from this place, and—hark! He is back in the hut again. He has given up looking for you. Strange he did not think that you might have slipped in here, but that's the way he always goes on. We might stay here for a week without his once remembering us. But look, Dick. Watch him and you will see something strange."

There was a round hole in the partition which divided the secret retreat in the cave from the hut. Alice opened a little slide which covered it, and the light came streaming in. Dick stepped forward and put his eyes to the peep-hole and looked into the hut. He could see old Dewar moving about muttering to himself. The man's whole appearance seemed to have changed. He did not even seem to remember the pay-bag lay unopened upon the floor, where he had thrown it when he first brought it in.

Old Dewar was kneeling, busy with a small wire which he seemed to be trying to pass through a hole in the floor. At last he got it placed to suit him, and then he shuffled out into the cave through the secret door, which now stood open, returning in a moment with a small portable furnace, which Dick remembered to have seen in the secret room where the chemical apparatus was stored. The furnace being placed, Dick saw old Dewar connect the ground wire, which he had pulled up out of an opening in the floor boards with another wire which ran down the leg of the furnace.

Then he brought a wire down from above and connected that, too. This wire ran out of a closet in which Dick rightly assumed the battery was kept. All this being completed, Dewar proceeded to build a fire in the furnace. By means of a small bellows attached he soon had the coals which he piled in glowing at red heat, and then he swung a thick, heavy iron pot into the furnace and threw in certain chemicals which, beginning to dissolve, sent up a thick, pungent smoke.

"What is he doing?" whispered Dick, filled with curiosity.

"Watch!" breathed Alice. Just then old Dewar took up a bottle and poured a quantity of colorless liquid into the pot. The smoke died away and the liquid began to simmer and boil. Dewar paid another visit to the closet then, and came out with a handful of old iron. There were several horseshoes, ends of broken miners' drills, an old broken hammer and other things—all he could hold, and threw them into the pot.

"He believes that he can turn iron into gold," breathed Alice. "He thinks he is an alchemist. He's man!" As the flames of the melting iron shot up the ceiling old Dewar threw into the pot a handful of certain powder which he shook out of a bottle. Instantly the flames died down and the contents of the pot assumed a deep yellow shade and began to glow.

"At last! At last!" he cried, trembling with excitement. "At last I have succeeded. Iron into gold. My fortune is made. The tales of the alchemists in old times were not false, but true. I shall be rich, rich, rich. Ah! great heavens, what is this? The color dying out? It cannot be. No!" He seized the bottle and shook more of the powder into the pot.

Instantly there was a fearful explosion, the furnace was shattered in a thousand pieces, the pot flew across the room, striking the wall and scattering its contents all over the room. The red hot coals scattered about the floor in every direction. Old Dewar fell on his face, to all appearances dead. Instantly the floor began to blaze in a dozen places.

"Oh, my father! My poor father!" screamed Alice. "Help me, Dick. It's death to us to stay here. Under the hut a hundred pounds and more of dynamite are stored. If the fire gets to it we are lost!"

Startled—frightened? Well, rather. Neither word explains Dick's state of mind then.

"Show me the secret spring!" he cried. "I can't find it!"

"Oh, Dick, and I can't tell you how to find it on the inside!" gasped Alice. "I only knew how to open it in the other way."

"That's a pity," said Dick, a strange calmness coming over him, "for I don't believe I can find it unless you tell me, and if what you say about the dynamite is true, Alice, then we are face to face with death."

CHAPTER XXIV.—Conclusion.

Scarcely had Dick given utterance to that despairing exclamation than the floor caught fire over near the pay-bag, and also began blazing near the door.

"Hark!" cried Alice, suddenly. "Don't I hear somebody out in the cave?" Dick gave up looking for the secret spring and turned his attention to the door, kicking and beating on it for all he was worth.

"Courage, Alice! Courage!" he shouted. "It begins to give!" Again he threw himself against it—again and still again!

It's a-going, Alice! Here it goes!" he cried. In flew the door a wreck, carrying Dick with it. He fell sprawling on the floor right in the fire, and his hands were badly burned. He was up again in an instant, but even before he could accomplish it the rush of many feet were heard along the secret passage leading in from the cave, the door was burst open and a dozen men, headed by Joaquin Matanzas, came bursting into the room.

"What's all this, Alice? What's all this?" demanded Joaquin. "The old man dead? The place on fire? I knew it would come to this. Ha! That mail boy again, and, by thunder, the pay-bag, too. This is luck. Everything is coming my way at last." Alice bent over her father weeping—she never even looked up. Dick made a grab for the pay-bag, got it and turned and faced Joaquin.

"Don't you lay a hand on that girl. If you do—" He drew his revolver and threw himself in front of Alice, who sprang up and turned on Joaquin with flashing eyes.

"Leave us!" she cried. "If you were twenty times my cousin I would never marry you, Joaquin Matanzas! Leave this place unless you want to die!"

"Not if I know it unless you go with me!" shouted Joaquin.

"Shoot him, Dick! screamed Alice. "Shoot me, too, rather than let him take me away!" Dick fired. The shot was a miss. In an instant Joaquin was upon him and had wrenched the revolver away. He closed on Dick and they grappled.

"Get the girl! Look out for the pay-bag, boys!" he yelled.

"Look out for yourselves!" screamed Alice. "There are hundreds of pounds of dynamite under the floor here—just let the fire get at it and you'll see!" Nothing else was needed to end the fight up in short order. The men flew to the door, and flinging it open, rushed out in a hurry. At the same instant Dick tripped Joaquin up and threw him upon the floor with stunning force.

"Fly, Alice, fly!" he shouted. "The floor is almost burned through." He caught the frightened girl by the arm, and, seizing the pay-bag in his disengaged hand, rushed out of the hut and into the arms of Joaquin's followers, who started to close about them, urged on by Joaquin, who came tumbling out of the hut, when all at once there was a rush of horses up the canyon.

"Help, Gopher! Help!" shouted Dick, who saw who was coming.

"Surrender, Joaquin Matanzas!" shouted Major Remington's voice, and all of Dick's Navajo Indians, headed by the major and Jumping Gopher, came dashing upon the scene of action. They made short work of the Black Riders, for they were all fully armed and Joaquin and his men had left their rifles in the cave. In a twinkling they had them surrounded and at their mercy.

"Hooray for Dick!" yelled Bill Struthers. "Dick's alive!"

"Look out for yourselves! Look out! Dynamite!" shouted Dick. "Back, every man of you. Back!" The warning was just in time. The Navajos dragged their prisoners back from the hut not one instant too soon. There was a fearful explosion, and the hut, rent into a thousand pieces, flew high in the air.

"Oh, my poor father!" groaned Alice, covering her face with her hands. But after all it made but little difference to old Dewar, for he was dead already. With Joaquin Matanzas, who was really Alice's cousin, it was different. By a strange fatality he was the only man out of all who suffered from this startling climax to the fight.

A flying fragment struck the leader of the Black Riders on the head, killing him instantly. And that was the end of Joaquin Matanzas and of his notorious band of Black Riders also, for Dick and the major made all hands of them prisoners and ran them back to the fort. It was Bill Struthers' suggestion that Dick might have found some way back to the hut underground. Where there was one cave in the mountain, Bill "allowed" that there might be others. To Major Remington it seemed a forlorn hope. How well Bill hit it has already been told.

So the pay-bag was turned over to the colonel of the regulars intact after all. As for the Black Riders, they were taken down to Denver and Jailed. Later on they all went to the penitentiary, and the name and fame of Dick the Half-Breed spread far and wide. Dick could have almost anything he wanted from the miners of the region then, but he preferred the life he had taken up.

"I'm half Indian and I'm going to stick to my father's people," he declared, and for two years he remained with the tribe, as did Bill Struthers, who declared he would never leave Dick. Since then, Dick has given up his roving life and is now working a gold mine claim, of which he is sole owner. He is still on excellent terms with his tribe, but Jumping Gopher is the acting chief now.

The reason is soon told. Dick married Alice Duval. It is on his wife's account that he has given up his wild life. The mine is prospering and the prospects are good for lots of gold in the near future.

Next week's issue will contain "THE NIHILIST'S SON; OR, THE SPY OF THE THIRD SECTION." By Allan Arnold.

INSULIN MAY CURE DIABETES

That the continued use of insulin may really cure and not just allay diabetes by giving the overstrained glands a long rest, is the opinion of Dr. F. G. Banting, who first extracted insulin from the pancreatic glands of animals and made it available for use by diabetic patients.

"Regardless of the severity of the disease," said Dr. Banting, "all patients may now be maintained sugar free. Since this is possible it is to be strongly advocated, for we have abundant evidence that there is a regeneration of the islet cells of the pancreatic glands when the strain thrown upon them by high blood sugar is relieved. In some moderately severe cases the carbohydrate tolerance has increased sufficiently so that insulin is no longer necessary."

THE BOY FROM NEW YORK

—OR—

A Young American at Oxford

By R. T. BENNETT

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XXII.—(continued)

"Don't mention that part of it, my boy. My firm will, of course, have a bill against the estate; but as we have found that there were securities and government bonds overlooked in the first settling up, there is plenty of money right in New York to pay all expenses and leave a nice balance. It was one of the greatest feats of tampering with books that ever came to our notice. But it is all straightened out now, Darrel, and today will bring the matter to a close."

Our hero had not been in the office more than an hour when John Atterson came in.

The man had been called there for the purpose of talking over business matters with Lord Hanley, or, in other words, he had been lured there.

When he came inside and saw Darrel Keene sitting behind the rail with his lordship he turned pale.

But he soon calmed himself, and bade his nephew a pleasant good-afternoon, and then asked him what had brought him to London.

"He has come here to have a guardian appointed to look after his interests in the gas company, Mr. Atterson," retorted Lord Hanley, before Darrel could make a reply.

Atterson gave a gasp, and fell back in a chair. "Wha-a-a-t!" he stammered.

"It is all up with you, you confounded villain!" exclaimed Lawyer Spencer, rising to his feet and pointing an accusing finger at the man. "The papers are made out for your arrest, but it remains for the boy from New York to say whether you will be or not. It was a fiendish scheme that you worked so successfully on the widow and the orphan, was it not? But it has failed just when you thought everything was running your way. Very kind of you to invite your wife's sister and her son to come to England and partake of your hospitality, I must say!"

When he did find words he fell upon his knees and began to plead for mercy.

After a while it was settled that he should have thirty days to leave England in, and when he had signed several legal documents in the presence of the proper authorities he was allowed to take his departure.

That evening Darrel called at the residence of the Attersons in company with Lord Hanley and Lawyer Spencer.

There was a tearful scene between the two sisters, but we must not dwell upon this. The result was that Darrel's mother accepted the hospitality of Lord Hanley, and two days later she became the guest of Lady Blanche at Hanley Hall, Oxford township.

The boy from New York went back to his studies at St. Aldate's University, just as though nothing had happened.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Darrel Keene's Triumph.

The day soon came around for the great game of football between St. Aldate and Merton.

Both elevens were said to be in fine form, and there was much speculating on the result.

Merton held the last season's championship, and had won four out of five games this season.

If St. Aldate won from her she would be right in line for the championship of Oxford.

Jack Haywood had been elected captain of the St. Aldate's eleven, and he was doing his best with the boys to get them in championship form.

Darrel Keene played full-back, and the fact that an American boy was to play such an important position roused the interest of the students of all the colleges.

Our hero had said nothing of the wonderful change in his circumstances to anyone at the college.

He had not even spoken to his cousin about it, and for some reason—probably shame—Fred's parents had not apprised him of what had occurred.

But they would have to do so before long, for they had arranged to go to Australia, starting from London a couple of days before the allotted time was up.

Young Atterson still hated the boy from New York, and when he saw the glory that Darrel was getting out of the fact that he played on the varsity eleven he resolved upon making him look small on the day of the football game.

The line-up took place at three o'clock. It was a cloudy day, and a raw wind was blowing.

Some might call it an ideal football day, but there were those among the spectators who were satisfied that it was ugly weather for the game.

One of the largest crowds that ever came to see a football game had gathered, and the men and boys of a sporting turn of mind were betting freely on the result.

The odds were slightly in favor of Merton, but when the two teams lined up on the gridiron it dropped to even.

The difference in the looks of the two teams was so little that the wiser ones came to the conclusion that it was an even thing.

Fred Atterson, Dyke Thistle and Sir Dawson Buckley were betting against their own college, and Charlie Miser of course was betting on his own team.

They all wanted to see St. Aldate go down before the Merton boys just because the boy from New York was playing on the team.

We will not give a detailed account of the game, suffice it to say that at the end of the first half neither side had scored a point, though when the referee called time Merton had the ball on St. Aldate's five-yard line.

The betting started in Merton's favor again, but the supporters of St. Aldate were not disheartened.

The team had played a little nervously at first, but as the game proceeded they got into form.

It was an unfortunate fumble on the part of Jack Haywood, who played right guard, that gave Merton the lead at the close of the half.

The boy from New York had made some bril-

hant plays during the half, but he was not supported as he should have been.

As he went away to get rubbed down it occurred to him that if they were going to win he must take a desperate chance.

Their rivals outweighed them by an average of six pounds, and weight is generally bound to tell.

"It is too bad, Darrel," said Haywood, as they stood together. "It was you who was responsible for all our gains, and then, just as a touchdown seemed sure, I had to go and lose the ball on a fumble. I did want to score in the first half, so as to put more confidence in the boys."

"Never mind, Jack," was the reply. "I am the only freshman on the team, but I think I will try something in the last half that will astonish them. It may succeed and it may not, but, anyhow, it will make a little excitement."

"What do you propose, Darrel?"

"A kick from the field."

"Good! The wind will be in your favor."

"I have often made such plays while at school, and it strikes me that I can do it now."

"Go ahead! I am sure you will do it!" cried Haywood, with brightening face. "I shan't say a word to any of the boys. We have been working a rush game all through, and if you can make a goal from the field it will surprise everybody, as no one will be looking for it."

When the time was up the rivals faced each other like warriors of old.

The game got into play, and for the space of ten minutes it was about an even thing.

The crowd became delirious with excitement, for both teams were doing great work, both on the aggressive and defensive.

But toward the last Merton got a gaff on that made things look blue for St. Aldate's.

When there were but three minutes more to play their quarterback got the ball, and reached St. Aldate's ten-yard line before he was downed.

But her triumph was short-lived, for a brilliant play on the part of Jack Haywood got him the ball on the pass, and away he started, dodging right and left.

He managed to get to Merton's forty-yard line amidst a burst of applause from St. Aldate's supporters.

Darrel made up his mind that it was now or never!

There was just about a minute to play, and the excited spectators had about decided that the game was going to end in a tie.

But the boy from New York had no such idea.

He took his position and waited for the ball to be passed.

It was done in less than three seconds.

And Darrel Keene, by a superb play, got it!

Then he made a move as though to run with it, but instead of doing it, he dropped the ball and gave it a mighty kick.

High in the air soared the pig-skin sphere, while a mighty roar went up from the spectators.

Darrel had judged the distance well, for squarely over the pole between the two posts the ball went, landing on the ground and bounding off into the front ranks of the crowd at that end.

It was a magnificent kick, and while the excited throng was cheering itself hoarse the time-keeper called the game.

Six to nothing in favor of St. Aldate!

Some of the more enthusiastic of the boys picked up the boy from New York, and carried him around on their shoulders.

He had unquestionably won the game for them!

Fred Atterson was black in the face from rage.

He had been boasting about the grounds that Darrel Keene was but an American pauper, and that his father had taken pity on him and sent him to Oxford.

This did not satisfy him, it seemed. He wanted to tell it to the boy himself.

He waited till Darrel started for the dressing-rooms, and then, with his cronies at his back, he strode up to the boy from New York, and exclaimed:

"You did fine, Darrel! But perhaps the crowd would not cheer so loudly if they knew that you were nothing but a pauper, and that you were here at the expense of my father, who took pity on you."

Our hero's face flushed.

He had not expected anything like this from his cousin. His blood was up instantly, and turning to him, he answered, in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear:

"That is not so, Fred Atterson! It is you who are the pauper! You are here at my expense! I did not tell you what I went to London for, but I will now. I was to save your father from being sent to prison. He stole what belongs to me when I am twenty-one, and made himself a rich man! You will be notified to go to London in a few days, so you can start on a voyage to Australia. I am no pauper, Fred Atterson, for I own the controlling interest in the Great London Gas Co."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Conclusion.

A week has elapsed since the scene on the football grounds.

Fred Atterson is no longer a student at St. Aldate's College.

He was called to London the day after he allowed his temper to get the best of him, resulting in his being humiliated before a whole crowd.

The boy he hated and envied so had triumphed, and he had become just plain Fred Atterson—one of the most humble boys in England.

The lesson he had received had not been lost on Dyke Thistle and Charlie Miser, either.

They talked it all over between them, and made up their minds to succumb to the inevitable.

Sir Dawson Buckley still hated our hero, though, for it was now a certainty that the young baronet had lost all chance of winning the hand of the pretty Lady Blanche of Hanley Hall.

It had leaked out that Lord Hanley had been appointed guardian for the boy from New York, and the fact of the boy's mother being an inmate of the Hall was sufficient to warrant the stories that were circulated to the effect that Darrel Keene would some day lead the fair lady to the altar.

Sir Dawson became quite investive as he thought it all over.

He did his best to hire someone to give the boy from New York a thrashing, but he could not seem to find the man who would undertake it.

He himself was not capable of doing it. He had failed in his best point, which was the fighting of the duel, so he was not going to take any other risk.

It was a few days before Christmas, and the river Isis was frozen over with ice several inches in thickness.

The river was a favorite resort of the college boys in winter, and Darrel, being an excellent skater and very fond of the sport, took advantage of the ice, and went along with the rest.

On this particular day he was skating along up near the Ifley bridge with Tom Robins. They were having a little race, when as they rounded a turn they suddenly saw Sir Dawson Buckley ahead of them.

The young baronet had evidently been lingering at the wine-cup before coming on the river, for he was cutting a sorry figure.

With him were several boon companions in pretty much the same state, among whom were Dyke Thistle and Charlie Miser.

Right in the centre of the frozen river was a big wind-hole, and as our two friends watched the approaching skaters they saw the baronet make a sudden turn and go straight toward it.

"Come on, you—aw—fellows!" they heard him shout. "The one who goes the nearest to the hole has got to drink a whole bottle of champagne at the expense of the others, while they look on and don't drink a drop. Hurrah!"

"The fool is going to get a dousing, as sure as he is alive!" exclaimed Tom Robins.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when there was a sharp crack, and the ice gave way beneath the feet of Sir Dawson.

With a loud splash he went in and disappeared from sight.

The friends of the unfortunate young man then lost their heads to a man.

Some of them stood stock-still, and the others skated away as though they were going for assistance.

The boy from New York saw the foolish baronet come to the surface and go down again with a gurgling cry for help.

"He can't swim," said Darrel. "I am going to save him, Tom!"

The next instant he was heading for the hole with the speed of the wind!

Splash!

Darrel unhesitatingly leaped into the icy water!

Luckily for him, as he went under he came in contact with the drowning baronet.

Gripping him by the collar, he fought his way to the surface, and struck out for the jagged fringe of ice.

It was a narrow escape for him, for two seconds more and the tide would have carried both of them under the solid ice, and then it would have been a sure case of drown.

A simultaneous cry of joy went up from Dyke Thistle and the rest.

Such bravery they could not help but honor. Tom Robins was not idle all this time.

The very instant that Darrel plunged into the icy water Tom struck out for the shore, and now he was coming back with a long fence rail.

He got there just as our hero was clutching the edge of the ice and doing his best to keep the baronet, who was now unconscious, from going under.

"Steady, Darrel! I am right here!" cried Tom, and then he pushed the end of the rail forward.

At that instant the ice broke, and Darrel fell back into the water with his burden.

But he was quick enough to grab the rail as he slipped.

Two minutes later both he and the baronet were pulled out of the water.

The saving of Sir Dawson Buckley's life by the Boy from New York soon got noised about, and once more Darrel Keene was the hero of the hour.

But the best part of it was that when the baronet had recovered sufficiently to go out again he called upon Darrel, and thanked him, at the same time begging his forgiveness for the way he had treated him.

From that time on the Boy from New York no longer had an enemy at Oxford.

Everything went along swimmingly, he being the recognized leader of sports at St. Aldate's until he graduated at the age of twenty-one.

He came into his fortune at this time, too, and soon after that there was a brilliant wedding at Hanley Hall.

At the time of this writing Darrel Keene and his beautiful bride, the Lady Blanche, were making a tour of the United States on their honeymoon trip.

And this ends the story of a young American at Oxford.

The End.

A new serial will appear in this weekly next week entitled:

True Yankee Pluck

or

The Minute Boys of Cape Ann

By R. T. Bennett

Be sure and read it

FRENCHMEN FLY 2,937 MILES IN 29 HOURS, SETTING NEW NON-STOP AIRPLANE RECORD

Captain Girier and Lieutenant Dordille, who left Le Bourget recently, landed at Omsk, Siberia, after covering 2,937 miles and established a new non-stop straight line flight record.

The French aviators covered the distance in twenty-nine hours. The previous non-stop straight line record was made by Arrachart brothers, who flew from Le Bourget to Basra on the Persian Gulf, covering a distance of about 2,700 miles in twenty-six and one-half hours.

(The flight of the Arracharts three weeks ago broke the non-stop distance record of the American Lieutenants MacReady and Kelly, which had stood since May, 1923. They flew from Mineola, L. I., to San Diego, Cal., 2,520 miles, in twenty-six hours fifty and one-half minutes.)

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, AUGUST 25, 1926

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

AEROPLANE CONCERT

An aeroplane 5,000 feet over the city of Paris broadcast a complete concert by radio.

SUNBURN BARRED

There will be no sunburned young women in the Winter Garden revue, "The Great Temptations." Since the company has adopted the practice of having company swims on nearly all non-matinee days at nearby beaches, the Winter Garden management has issued a request to the young women that they avoid sunburn.

ROCKFELLER'S GRANDSON'S RIDE IN \$200 CABIN

In keeping within their own personal means, two grandsons of John D. Rockefeller, one of the world's richest men, got back from Europe recently in a cabin costing them \$100 each. They arrived on the American Merchant Line steamship American Trader.

The boys were John D. Rockefeller, 3d, and Nelson Aldridge Rockefeller, sons of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

The American Trader is one of the line's five express freight steamers which were recently partly converted into passenger carriers. Their capacity is only seventy passengers on the ship.

TEST SOIL BEFORE FERTILIZING

Ammonium nitrate performs an extremely useful function in fertilizing certain crops, especially grasses, as it enables them to take the best advantage of any phosphorus compounds present in the soil. When, however, the soil is a sandy one, ammonium nitrate is not the best fertilizer to use. The plants split it up into ammonia and nitric acid, and in a sandy soil they absorb more ammonia than nitric acid. This free acid, being left in the soil, accumulates, with the result that the soil is quickly rendered acid. It is therefore advisable to make certain of the type of soil before applying ammonium nitrate as a fertilizer.

MINIATURE RAILROAD SHOWN IN EXHIBIT AT SESQUI

A miniature railroad, built by scale and showing various types of trains of standard equipment operating on four tracks representing a typical section of the roadbed, is the principal feature of the exhibit of the Pennsylvania Railroad opened recently in the Palace of Liberal Arts and Manufactures at the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition in Philadelphia.

Tunnels, signal towers and other mechanical contrivances are shown in accurate detail and the landscape is representative of the territory which the "Pennsy" serves. A huge painting, showing the side view of a standard steel coach, in exact dimensions, forms a background for the exhibit, while the reception room in front of the mechanical arrangement is furnished in the style used during the Colonial period.

LAUGHS

"Waiter, is this beef stew or Hungarian goulash?" "Let me see. This is Wednesday, isn't it, sir? Then it's goulash."

Nurse (taking his temperature)—Sir, you are in danger—your temperature is 104. Business Man—When it reaches 105 sell.

Best Man—What's the matter! Have you lost the ring? Bridegroom—The ring's all right, old man, but I've lost my enthusiasm."

One day last winter little Eloise was looking at a fall of unusually large snowflakes. "Oh, mamma!" she exclaimed, "Look at the popped rain coming down!"

Sister (who had just sung for charity)—Well, I never thought my voice would fill that big hall. Freshman Brother—Neither did I. I thought it would empty it.

Angry Diner—You call this clam chowder? Why, there aren't enough clams in it to flavor it. Waiter—We don't try to flavor it, sir; all we do is put in enough to christen it.

Client—I want to sue for a divorce and an allowance of \$1,500 a year. Lawyer—What is your husband's income? Client—It's about that. I wouldn't ask for more than the man makes. I'm not that kind.

Effie's Brother—Do you love my sister Effie? Effie's Steady Company—Why, Willie, that is a queer question. Why do you want to know? Effie's Brother—She said last night she would give a dollar to know, and I'd like to scoop it in.

"Did you notice that woman who just passed?" inquired he. "The one," responded she, "with the gray hat, the white feather, the red velvet roses, the mauve jacket, the black skirt, the mink furs and the lavender spats?" "Yes." "Not particularly."

THE MYSTERY OF MADHURST HOUSE

On a drowsy day in the early autumn, when everything, from the sleepy sighing of the scarcely perceptible breeze to the doleful and monotonous chirping of the crickets, seemed to woo the senses to slumber with a solicitation not to be easily resisted, particularly if one were inactive, Gerty Merrill fell asleep in an easy-chair, behind the curtain of young Mr. Alexander Madhurst's alcove smoking-room.

Madhurst House, as the old country residence was called, had been the home of the Madhurst family almost to the time "whereof the memory of man runneth not"; at least, the old stock of the past generations had resided there ever since the days of Oliver Cromwell, and long before that, if traditions faithfully handed down from father to son were to be credited.

The present occupant of the ancient edifice, "with modern improvements"—as the advertisements say—was Mr. Alexander Madhurst, the sole surviving representative of the family.

Gerty Merrill, though barely turned eighteen, was one of the most proficient and successful female attaches of the Scotland Yard detective service at the time of which I am telling you, though now she is—well, never mind what she is, I came near getting ahead of my story. You will know all before I've finished, however, so to proceed with the natural sequence of events as they transpired.

One day in summer, a couple of months preceding the memorable day when "the girl spy" fell asleep behind the curtain of the alcove at Madhurst House, Mr. Alexander Madhurst called upon me for professional advice and assistance.

His was a rather odd story, and this was its substance:

"For some months past," said he, "I have lost considerable sums of money from my sleeping-room. You may suppose quite naturally, that I don't keep a great deal of money about me, but I usually have at least fifty pounds in my pocket-book for current expenses.

"Now, invariably, when I retire to sleep it is my custom after securing the door and the windows—my room is on the second floor—to place my purse underneath my pillow, and yet, although I am never disturbed during the night, at least once a week, on examining my pocket-book in the morning upon awakening, I find that its contents are gone, and yet the mystery is, who could have taken it, for both the door and the windows I always find secured exactly as I left them upon retiring, and not the faintest trace of an intruder have I ever been able to discover?"

Mr. Madhurst paused, and I said: "Very well, sir, I will undertake the case, for I feel confident that the mystery is in the fact that there exists some secret way of ingress and egress to and from your sleeping-room, of the existence of which you are in ignorance."

Then he told me of the many additions which had been built to the old house, which was his ancestral home, and thus was my first suspicion

strengthened, and Mr. Madhurst himself coincided with my view of the case.

"I am at your service, Mr. Madhurst, for, to say the truth, there is not much doing in the criminal line just now, and I am at liberty to absent myself from London for a short time. I fancy I shall not be with you long before this mystery is cleared up. By the way, of whom does your household consist?" I asked.

"Of myself, of course; a housekeeper, coachman, butler and a couple of female domestics. I am sure, however, they are all innocent, for they have served my family faithfully for many years. No—no; not for a moment do I suspect one of my household of complicity in the thefts of which I have been made the victim," answered Mr. Madhurst in a tone of conviction.

The day I left Mr. Madhurst, one of the female servants of the house—a chambermaid—had given notice that she was about to be married and would no longer continue in his employ. Mr. Madhurst had casually mentioned that he should at once advertise in the London Times for a domestic to fill her place. I determined that Gerty Merrill should secure the place.

I thoroughly posted her regarding the mystery which she was to attempt to solve; and, sure enough, Mr. Madhurst's advertisement appeared, and my quick-witted assistant managed to secure the situation.

For some time no more mysterious thefts occurred at Madhurst House, and Gerty Merrill, who reported to me by letter, had nothing of much importance to communicate.

A certain young gentleman—a German student called Max Hertzhoff—who resided that summer with his uncle in the little village of Andover, had made Mr. Madhurst's acquaintance and became a frequent visitor at the old homestead.

I soon found out that Hertzhoff was a student of psychology, a chemist, and a general dabbler in occult mysteries, which have ever found their devotees among the students of the German universities.

Having studied Mr. Hertzhoff quietly, as occasion presented itself, until I had formed a pretty accurate opinion of his character, I came to the conclusion that this remarkable man had a deep purpose in cultivating the acquaintance of Mr. Madhurst. It then suddenly flashed upon my mind that the German might, in some way, be connected with the mystery which I was seeking to solve.

The day I fell asleep in the arm-chair behind the alcove curtain of Mr. Madhurst's smoking-room—that drowsy autumnal day—was a time when I made an unexpected discovery, as you shall hear.

When I fell asleep, concealed by the folds of the curtain, there was no one in the alcove. When I awoke with a start I heard the sound of voices.

Mr. Madhurst sat with his back toward me, but I had a good half-front view of the face of the German student. He was speaking earnestly to Madhurst.

"Then you will not let me have the loan?" said Hertzhoff.

"I assure you I am sorry that it is not in my power to assist you just at this time. If

you could wait until next month perhaps I could let you have the amount you require, although even then it would be an inconvenience to myself," Madhurst said.

"The delay would be fatal. I must strive to secure the loan elsewhere. My father, you know, is ignorant of my passion for the gaming-table, and were I to solicit him to advance the money I require it would be necessary to reveal the truth. In that case he would probably be enraged at the knowledge and refuse to serve me. I think I shall try the Shylocks of the city as a last resort."

"Perhaps you may succeed with them. I hope so, at all events. But in a friendly way I would advise you, Max, to let cards alone. Expert as you are, you occasionally meet with serious losses, and in the end the gamster generally comes to poverty and want."

"That's so, Madhurst, and I think I shall try to take your advice, which I can but acknowledge to be excellent. The trouble with me is that the gaming-table possesses an irresistible attraction, a sort of fascination which can only be comprehended by the confirmed gambler."

During this conversation the German student had kept his eyes upon the face of his companion, and now in amazement I beheld Mr. Madhurst's face slowly growing very pale, while gradually his head sank down upon his breast and his eyes closed as though he had suddenly fallen asleep.

The result of this strange proceeding was at once to cause Mr. Madhurst to breathe heavily, and there could now be no doubt that he was completely oblivious to all his surroundings.

"Now, then, to search the drawer," the German said.

He strode to the far end of the alcove, out of my sight, and heard him prying open the drawer of Mr. Madhurst's writing-desk which stood there. In a moment or so he reappeared.

"Ha, I have found it!" he exclaimed in an exultant whisper.

As he spoke he placed a folded paper—which I supposed he had taken from the drawer—in the inside pocket of his coat.

He was gone in a moment.

I sprang to Mr. Madhurst's side and aroused him by dashing a glass of ice-water in his face. The young man sprang to his feet.

"Mr. Madhurst, you have been victimized by a clever scoundrel, who possesses the power to mesmerize you. After putting you into a mesmeric trance, as he did just now, your esteemed friend, Max Hertzhoff, forced open yonder desk and possessed himself of some paper which, from his exultation in securing it, is, I suppose, of value," I said.

Madhurst rushed to the desk. Hurriedly he examined the contents of the drawer, which had been tossed about in considerable confusion.

While he was engaged in searching the desk I said:

"I must now introduce myself to you in my proper character. I am a detective; one of Mr. L—'s staff, and he sent me here to investigate the mystery which he failed to solve before business called him back to the city."

Mr. Madhurst was surprised and gratified at the same time.

"I find that a check for five hundred pounds,

which I had drawn up in favor of a creditor of mine who was to call upon me today, and which is payable by my London banker to bearer, is missing," said Mr. Madhurst.

"Not a moment must be lost. Telegraph to your bankers that the check has been stolen, and warn them not to pay it," I advised.

"I shall proceed to the village for that purpose at once."

Horses were brought around from the stable and in a few minutes we were riding rapidly on our way to the village.

While Mr. Madhurst was sending his dispatch I routed out the constable and proceeded to Mr. Hertzhoff's abode.

The gentleman we wanted was not to be found, but a farmer's boy whom we met stated that he had just passed a gentleman on horseback beyond the village who answered to Mr. Hertzhoff's description.

We had not proceeded far when we heard a deep groan from the roadside, and we saw Max Hertzhoff lying there, with a broken leg, as we soon discovered. He had been thrown from his horse. We found the stolen check in his possession.

The man made no remarks, save to curse us heartily. He was conveyed to the village jail, and finally confessed that he had compelled Madhurst to steal from himself. That is to say, during the many months of their intimacy he had acquired such complete mesmeric power over Madhurst that the latter, when he willed it, would bring his ready cash to him in the dead of night, and, of course, without the slightest knowledge of what he was doing.

Thus the mystery of Madhurst House was solved, for, of course, all the doors and windows which he found secured each morning were, in the mesmeric state, opened and properly closed and secured by Hertzhoff's victim himself."

This is where Gerty Merrill's part of the story ends.

I may add that she eventually became Mrs. Madhurst.

WARNING

Beside the curving road I sit
And when a gentle maid
To keep a tryst goes tripping by,
Half joyous, half afraid,
I cry to her, "Oh! don't go down
To that burning Autumn wood,
For there I went with my dear love,
So tall and kind and good,
And as we stood beside a tree
Where Beauty's hand was laid
We heard bright laughter in the leaves
(And suddenly I was afraid),
For a dryad, beautiful as Dawn,
Leapt from the blushing tree
And cast on my love such a curious look
That it stole his heart from me.

"Dear, don't go down to that Autumn wood,
There's nothing there but pain,
For the heart a dryad steals away
Can never be won again."

REBECCA HELMAN.

(N. Y. Times.)

PLUCK AND LUCK

CURRENT NEWS

FIFTY WHALES PASS BIG LINER

Passengers on the Atlantic Transport line Minnewaska, which arrived recently from London, via Cherbourg, saw a school of whales cross the bow of the ship forty miles east of Nantucket Lightship.

There was a fog and the speed of the liner was reduced. Fifty whales were counted by the passengers, and the last one passed close to the bow.

The officer on the bridge said the whales were going toward the Azores.

AMUNDSEN IS WELCOMED HOME BY HUGE CROWDS AT BERGEN

Captain Roald Amundsen and the Norwegian members of his expedition, which successfully flew over the North Pole in the dirigible Norge, have arrived at Bergen.

Huge crowds turned out to welcome him. The Mayor and various public bodies gathered at a banquet in honor of the explorers. The party will proceed to Oslo.

Captain Amundsen told interviewers that as no land had been seen around the Pole, the Polar Basin could be considered only as equivalent to international waters and that no nation could claim or annex the pole.

PRINCE AND ACTRESS STAGE MELODRAMA OF REAL LIFE

Ilenka Csaky, well known Hungarian actress and singer, provided a melodrama which surpassed anything she has done on the stage after she quarreled in a cafe in Budapest with Prince Domenico Russo, a member of the Italian Embassy staff.

After the quarrel Ilenka rushed from the cafe and hurled herself into the River Donau.

Prince Domenico was on her heels, and no sooner had Ilenka reached the rushing waters than Prince Domenico plunged over the embankment, and at the risk of his own life, brought Ilenka safely to shore.

A reconciliation is understood to have followed.

EXCAVATE COLONIAL RELICS

Excavation at Lafayette and Reade Streets, the site of Aaron Burr's well and New York City's first water works, has brought to light an iron pot containing Colonial coins, a skeleton, some old tools, a pair of ram's horns and a quantity of odd iron that has been sold as scrap for \$300.

All of the coins bore eighteenth century dates. Only two of them were post-Revolution money. An unusual motto, "Mind your own business," was engraved on one of the Colonial day pieces.

Loring M. Hewen, Managing Director of the Court Square Building, Inc., which is undertaking the excavation, said he believed the unearthed iron to be what is left of a standpipe thrown into the well many years ago.

DREAM REVIVES SEARCH FOR BOY LONG MISSING

The police have renewed their search for Harry Wiedenfeld, who disappeared from his home at

1 Goerck Street, N. Y. City, on Nov. 11, 1924, and who, if he lives, is now 8 years old.

Three detectives hunted for Harry for months after his parents, Wolfe and Esther Wiedenfeld, reported his disappearance, and every day one of them or both went to the Clinton Street Police Station or to the Missing Persons' Bureau to ask anxiously if the boy had been found. Presently they called only once a week and then, last March, evidently disheartened by the lack of the detectives' success or believing Harry dead, they ceased to call.

But a few days ago Mrs. Wiedenfeld reappeared before Captain John H. Ayres of the Missing Persons' Bureau.

"For a week," she said hesitantly, as if afraid some one might laugh at her, "I have dreamed of my boy, Harry. I see him in the little clothes he wore when he disappeared, and he holds out his arms to me and says, 'Don't give me up, mother. Keep looking for me.' My husband and I have saved \$600. We will give it to any one who can bring us news of Harry."

Captain Ayres told her the police would search without a reward.

BEER-BIBBING MONKEY, SEEKING A CHOICER FARE, WRECKS BERLIN'S FINEST WINE RESTAURANT

One innocent monkey trying to get a drink of wine wrecked one of Berlin's oldest and most aristocratic wine restaurants last night. In the melee at least a score of monocles were broken, the dignity of the Fire Department suffered and a squad of policemen was held up to ridicule.

* Amid the ruins of china, glassware, broken chairs and overturned tables, the formerly dignified proprietor saw his guests departing, vowing never again to enter an establishment where the waiters knew their favorite vintage and never even bothered asking the guests their desires.

The monkey lived in a common beer hall a block away, and as a favorite he received plenty of beer. But he decided that he wanted wine, broke his chain and made a dash for the wine restaurant. The guests, who had just begun their daily tirade against the present and spoke reverently of the golden past, resented the intrusion and tried to capture the animal, which defended itself by throwing glasses and bottles.

It was when the monkey skipped lightly from the bald head of an ex-naval officer to the bald head of an ex-army officer that the uproar became general. The Fire Department and the police came, but could not combat against the sharp teeth of the Dayton hero until they had sought out a fencing club and borrowed all the available heavy gloves.

Even then it was only firewater that caused the monkey's downfall. Passing the bar, he seized a bottle containing vodka, probably to use it as a weapon, but when he perched high on a picture of a noted warrior and the pursuit slackened, he drank deeply. His capture followed as soon as the liquor took effect.

BRIEF BUT POINTED

AREA OF UNITED STATES AND CANADA

According to The Eagle Almanac, Canada is larger in area than the United States. Canada has an area of 3,729,665. The area of the United States, including Alaska, is 3,617,673.

RADIUM FROM PARSONITE

Parsonite, a new radium bearing mineral found in the Belgian Congo, was described lately to the Academy of Sciences in an address written by the Belgian Professor Shoef. The paper, says the Scientific American, told of the success that is being met with in extracting radium from the mineral at a special laboratory in Antwerp.

DUELS NOW SERIOUS IN ITALY AS RESULT OF BITTER POLITICS

Personal bitterness growing out of political controversy in Italy is making dueling a serious business rather than a mere formality.

Luigi de Alfonso, Honorary Consul general of the Fascist militia, and former Under-Secretary of State Giuseppe Caradonna, recently added another to the constantly growing list of savage encounters. The two men met in a lonely wood near Rome and fought with sabres under condition permitting any kind of blow.

Signor de Alfonso was seriously slashed three times.

FIVE LARGEST HARBORS

It depends upon what is meant by "largest" and by "harbor." Using the word harbor as a port, and considering only those having on their shores cities of commercial importance, the five largest in area are Port Philip, Melbourne Harbor, Australia, approximately 400 square miles; Yokohama, Japan, 200 square miles; New York City, 175 square miles; San Francisco, 79 square miles. In export and import value the first are New York on the coast; London, England, 67 miles from sea; Hamburg, Germany, 67 miles from sea. In tonnage, the largest are New York, Antwerp and London.

SESQUI HONORS NOTED DOG

"Owney," the world's greatest dog traveler, who was awarded more than 100 tags and medals because of his "services" in the United States Postoffice departments, has been signally honored at the Government's postoffice exhibit at the Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition, in Philadelphia.

The body of the globe-trotter, mounted by a taxidermist after the animal's death in 1897, is on view in the model postoffice in the Exposition grounds. "Owney" was the official mascot of the entire postal force of the country from 1888 to 1897.

HOW TO PLAY QUICK STEP

Two lines are marked on the ground, about 100 feet apart. Five or more may play. One player is chosen to be the counter and he stands on one line with his back to the other players. The others stand on the opposite line. The counter then

counts rapidly and loudly while the players on the line behind him walk quickly toward his line. As he stops counting he turns, and if he sees anyone moving, calls his name, and that player has to go back and start over. The others continue to advance toward the counter's line, but only while he is counting. The counting continues until all have crossed the line where the counter stands, and the last one over must change places with the counter.

A BUTTON'S HISTORY

A most unique relic of war is possessed by George Clutch, commander of the Isham Keith (G. A. R.) post in Columbus, Indiana. It is a button off a private soldier's uniform. During the latter part of the war, Mr. Clutch's brother-in-law, J. F. Gallaher, whose home is in Ohio, had the misfortune to be captured and confined in Libby Prison. The story of how the prisoners in that hole suffered and died from starvation, exposure and ill-treatment is a part of history. After Mr. Gallaher had been there some time, he began to feel the need of money, which would enhance the prospect of reaching the Union lines should he succeed in making his escape. A surgeon of his regiment, who was in the prison, was about to be exchanged. He cut off one of the large brass buttons from his uniform, and, separating the two parts of it, made a cavity by taking out the filling.

He then wrote on a slip of blank paper, in a small, but distinct hand, the following note to his wife, which he inclosed in the cavity, and again sealed the button together:

"Libby Prison—Dear Wife—If we are not exchanged by 1st of December send me thirty dollars in greenbacks. Put in a vial canned up in a can of tomatoes or blackberries. Send it in a box of provisions. J. P. GALLAHER."

This note is well preserved, and was still resting snugly in its place in the button when shown by Mr. Clutch. To continue the story, the button was made to take the place of another on the uniform of the exchanged surgeon, who reached home and delivered it to Mrs. Gallaher in due time. It could not have escaped the close scrutiny of the officers had it been conveyed out of the prison in any other manner, as the officers were particular to search all of the exchanged prisoners, including the surgeon, most minutely.

Mr. Gallaher did not have much hope that his scheme would succeed, even should the note reach his wife, but he was surprised, for the fruit arrived in a short time, and although closely inspected by the prison officials, they failed to discover the vial containing the money concealed in one of the jars of thick preserves. Soon after receiving the money Mr. Gallaher succeeded in making his escape from prison, being one of the chief participants in the great tunnel expedition. He found the thirty dollars obtained in so novel a manner to be of great service to him in reaching the Union lines. When Mr. Clutch was in Ohio a short time ago he was given the button and its contents to keep as a memento, and it is greatly prized as such.

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